THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRAGEDY

A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure.

THESE

Présentée
à la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg
Pour obtenir le titre de
Doctorat de l'Université de Strasbourg (Mention Lettres)

par

CHU KWANG-TSIEN
B. A. (Hong-Kong)
M. A. (Edinburgh)

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Monsieur le Docteur Charles BLONDEL

Correspondant de l'Institut

Professeur de Psychologie à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg

Hommage de profonde reconnaissance

PREFACE.

The present thesis grows out of a paper on «Pleasure in Tragedy» read in 1927 to a discussion group of Advanced Students in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. Dr. James Drever, Head of the Department of Psycholgy, suggested that I should try to extend the paper into a thesis. I followed his advice and worked on the subjct for one year under the joint supervision of Dr. James Drever and Dr. H. J. C. Grierson, Professor of English Literature. But later on I abandonned the attempt, mainly because the pursuit of general culture made me somewhat reluctant to waste my time and spoil the subject. For the last five years I have been studying various subjects connected with tragedy. The more I read, the more I realize the vastness of the subject and my own incompetence in dealing with it. If I now venture to take up the subject again, it is not due to any increase of self-confidence, but for the simple reason that circumstances do not permit me to stay in Europe any longer, and it is in Europe that I have the most opportunities to consult with professors and books.

No words can express my deep gratitude to Prof. Charles Blondel, under whose supervision I worked, and to Prof. A. Kozsul, with whom I have often consulted. Without their numerous suggestions and corrections the present thesis would remain much more imperfect. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my former teachers, Prof. H. J. C. Grierson and Dr. James Drever to whom I owe much encouragement and advice.

K. T. Chu

March, 1933, Strasbourg

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM AND A FORECAST OF OUR PROGRAMME.

I.

The problem we propose to study in the following pages may be stated at once: why do we take pleasure in Tragedy?

The question is a perplexing one when we remember that misfortunes and calamities generally call forth nothing but lamentation and complaint. Xerxes, the great Persian king, burst into tears while he gazed on his innumerable armies on their way to Greece. «There came upon me a sudden pity», he confessed to his uncle, «when I thought of the shortness of man's life, and considered that of this host, so numerous as it is, not one will be alive when a hundred years are gone by». «And yet there are sadder things in life than that», replied his uncle, «short as our time is, there is no man, whether it be here among this multitude or elsewhere, who is so happy as not to have felt the wish, I will

not say once, but full many a time, that he were dead rather than alive. Calamities fall upon us, sicknesses vex and harass us, and make life, short though it be, to appear long» (1).

These are not solitary cries; they have been echoed again and again. Men have groaned perpetually about the ills and woes of their life on earth. Remembering Job and other victims of divine anger, we cannot blame them for peevishness. But the curious thing is that, while they have such strong aversion for suffering and distress, they yet take delight in the sight of tragic events on the stage. They leave their seats well satisfied when they have seen Medea murdering her own children, or King Lear ill-treated by his own daughters.

The pleasure thus taken in tragedy does not seem to do credit to human nature and has perplexed many a pious soul. St. Augustine for example, has left us a very interesting passage in his «Confessions»:

«Stage-plays also carried me away, full of images of my miseries, and of fuel to my fire. Why is it, that man desires to be made sad, beholding doleful and tragic things, which yet himself would by no means suffer? Yet he desires as a spectator to feel sorrow at them, and this very sorrow is his pleasure. What is this but a miserable madness? for a man is the more affected with these actions, the less free he is from such actions» (2).

The problem as stated by St. Augustine has perhaps occurred to most of us play-goers. When we turn to modern psychology for an answer, we shall be disappointed to find that the problem of tragic pleasure has often been unduly neglected. Kant in his «Critique of Pure Reason» has passed over the tragic in silence. Ribot in his chapter on aesthetic emotions in the «Psychologie des sentiments» and Prof. Delacroix in his recent «Psychologie de l'Art» are equally reticent about Tragedy. Such negligence is rather surprising, as modern psychology has extended its search light to almost every sphere of human activity from the conditioned reflex of the salivary glands to the dark regions of dreams and

racial memories. Nor is the domain of literature left unexplored, witness the works of the Freudian School on myths and legends and the recent searching study of the Psychography of Marcel Proust by Prof. Blondel. Greig in the bibliography attached to his «Psychology of Laughter» mentions no less than some three hundred volumes on the psychological study of Comedy alone. Who would not wish that a single volume on Tragedy might be placed as a companion to Bergson's lucid and charming essay, «Le Rire»? Why is it that so much has been written on the psychology of Comedy and so little on that of Tragedy? Is it that man is more loquacious about the brighter side of life, but when he comes to Tragedy, he preserves a dignified taciturnity proper to the occasion?

II.

Surely such a negligence of the problem of tragic pleasure cannot be excused on the ground of its unimportance. Tragedy has been generally regarded as the highest form of literary art, and those who have excelled in it have been the world's greatest geniuses. They are the most profound psychologists before the science of Psychology has ever come into vogue. It would certainly be unwise for psychologists to ignore Tragedy wherein the psychological wisdom of the world's best intellects accumulates from Aeschylus to Shakespeare and Goethe. To confine ourselves to tragic pleasure, a solution to this thorny problem would throw invaluable light on many general psychological questions. Take feeling for example. There has been recently a hot debate among the psychologists as to whether feeling is determined by conation or conation by feeling. According to the Hedonists, every human activity may be described as an effort either to seek pleasure or to avoid pain. The vitalists, on the other hand, hold that pleasure and pain are not inherent in things themselves but dependent on the success or failure of our activity to attain its purpose. As it will

be shown later on, we can test the validity of these opposing theories by applying them to the problem of tragic pleasure. Again the relation between pleasure and pain is another thorny problem for psychologists. Is the difference between them a qualitative one or only a quantitive one? Can they be blended together? Can pain be converted into pleasure? Now all these questions may be studied to the best advantage in connection with the problem of tragic pleasure. Needless to mention that the nature of sympathy, the effect of emotional relief and many other problems of psychology are equally closely related to the problem which we are going to study.

Nor is the importance of our problem confined to Psychology. Its solution will be a great contribution to Aesthetics. Students of Aesthetics are always perplexed when approaching the cross-roads of morality and art. If one is initiated in the school of the Romantics or of Croce and the «expressionists», one asserts the intrinsic value of art and the autonomy of aesthetic experience. Art then would seem to be pursued for ist own sake and justified on its own ground; it is not held to serve any external end such as moral teaching or practical profit. Some would go so far as to deny the influence of life on art and the intervention of association in aesthetic experience altogether. On the other hand, if one follows the long tradition of philosophers from Plato to Tolstoi, one would equally be sure of the ultimate dependence of art on life and morality. Art would be then just as fully a «good» as virtue. Some would go even further and regard art as a handmaid to morality. The dispute between these two opposing schools is nowhere so acute as in the domain of Tragedy, for here the quetions of justice, of the moral effect of art and of the influence of life on art thrust themselves upon us at every moment. So it cannot be settled without the evidences which Tragedy offers us. Moreover, it has been a favourite pursuit of the aestheticians to determine the relation and difference of various «kinds» of beauty, for example, the sublime and the graceful, the tragic and

the comic, the lyric and the epic, etc. It is curious to note that, with the possible exception of Burke, they have never suspected that there should be a close relation between the tragic and the sublime. Both Schopenhauer and Hegel, for example, dealt very fully with Tragedy and with the sublime, but made no attempt to define their relation and difference. Other writers, following Kant, have left the tragic untouched altogether. Surely no aesthetics is worth its name if it ignores a form of art which has been justly honoured throughout all ages. In the present thesis we shall try to fill what seems to us to be a great gap in aesthetics. We shall define the relation and difference between the tragic and other modes of beauty, espicially the sublime.

Closely related to aesthetics is literary criticism. Literature, like other forms of art, is a medium through which mind speaks to mind. All sound criticism must be based on a profound knowledge of the mind which creates and the mind which appreciates. In the past, much literary criticism has been vitiated by the lack of a sound psychological basis. To confine ourselves to dramatic art, ever since the Renaissance, European critics have been waging endless wars on the relative importance of character and plot, on the rules of the Unities, on the necessity of poetic justice and on a thousand other academic problems which, like Medusa's horrible head, have turned many a scholar into stone. Now these problems, though of real interest, cannot be satisfactorily solved by merely citing the dictum of Aristotle or pointing to the practice of Shakespeare or Racine. The emotional effect of one way or the other on the audience must be also taken into account. This brings us immediately to the centre of our problem, that of tragic pleasure.

Similarly the solution of our problem will render some service to the arts of staging ad acting. Since Diderot pronounced his famous paradox, the question has been constantly disputed among the actors whether an actor should identify himself completely with the character he is personifying or remain his own

master and free from all sensibility. Was La Clairon a greater actress than La Malibran? Or was Talma right in insisting on the combined effect of self-control and momentary inspiration? The controversy about realism and the Theatrical in scenery-setting is another point to be considered. Should the stage produce the illusion of real life with its solid rooms and realistic decorations? Or should it be something full of expressive artifice and leave ample scope for imagination, as Gordon Craig has upheld? All these questions, again, cannot be satisfactorily settled without some due consideration of the emotional effct of acting and staging on the audience.

Though our interest is mainly psychological and scientific, we must not omit to mention the bearing of our problem on religion and philosophy. Tragedy is intimately concerned with the same ultimate problems which religion and philosophy try to solve. But it should be borne in mind that Tragedy is neither a religious creed nor a philosophical system. In due course we shall have occasion to determine the relation in which Tragedy stands to both philosophy and religion. We shall explain also how religious and philosophical notions such as Justice, Fate etc. have all exerted their influence on those who have written on Tragedy. On the whole it may be safely said that philosophers are much more advanced than psychologists in recognizing the importance of the problem of Tragedy. Indeed in addressing ourselves to the present task, we are in presence of an august company, — Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Schiller, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, to name only a few of the philosophers who have tried their hand at the problem of Tragedy in the midst of their loftier meditations.

III.

In spite of the efforts made by philosophers and critics, the solution to the problem of Tragic pleasure seems to be as remote as ever. Their conclusions, though each interesting in its own

way, often contradict one another .The cause of tragic pleasure is attributed by one writer to malevolence, by another to sympathy; the tragic spirit is for one school of philosophers optimistic, for another, pessimistic; the determining force in Tragedy is Fate for certain critics and Justice, for others. Most of these theories fail to meet the demand of modern psychology; their authors have ignored certain fundamental principles by which one should be guided in such an inquiry. They have been generally led astray by certain vicious methods.

In the first place, Tragedy is a concrete thing and not a mere abstract notion. Consequently any adequate discussion of the problem of Tragedy must be based on facts, i.e. on the world's masterpieces of Tragedy. It is a common mistake, however, among philosophers to start at the wrong end. Instead of building up a theory inductively from a careful examination of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine and other great tragic poets, they deduce it a priori from some pre-conceived philosophical system. They set out with a major metaphysical premise, and, te prove it, they give Tragedy as a particular instance. But in doing so, they use that very premise to explain the nature of Tragedy, forgetting that it is the premise itself which requires demonstration. Hegel offers us a typical instance of such arguing in a vicious circle. He starts with the general philosophical notion of the Absolute, assuming that the world is of reason all compact, and that every thing in this world, evils and misfortunes not excluded, may be ethically explained and justified. He then goes on to give Tragedy as an instance of the triumph of Eternal Justice and would have us believe that Antigone was deservedly punished for having performed her family duty to a dead brother! Schopenhauer, too, sacrifices Tragedy to save his philosophy. Finding that Greek tragedy does not bear out his theory of resignation, he has the courage to assert that the Greeks, in spite of the monuments left by Aeschylus and Sophocles, «had not yet attained the summit and goal of Tragedy»! One can see from these instances how

the philosophers are ill at ease when they descend from Heaven and try their strength at individual concrete problems.

Another error more common with critics of little philosophical training is the failure to distinguish Tragedy as art from suffering in actual life. We shall have occasion to explain the difference more fully later on, suffice it to say here that Tragedy represents an idealized life or life set in an artificial frame. We do not respond to the calamities and misfortunes in Tragedy in the same way as we respond to those in actual life, just as we do not respond to the image of an apple in a picture by Van Gogh in the same way as we respond to a similar apple on a dining table. The enjoyment of tragedy is essentially an aesthetic activity, and as such, it should be distinguished from such practical attitudes as mourning the death of a beloved person or rejoicing over the defeat of an enemy. Writers on Tragedy generally put these two different orders of experience on the same footing. Edmund Burke, for example, supposes that at the representation of a most sublime and affecting tragedy, the audience would leave the theatre to witness the execution of a state-criminal in the adjourning public square, and goes on to argue from that supposition, which has by no means been proved by actual experience, that real misfortunes are more powerful in arousing sympathy than imitative arts. M. Faguet, on the other hand, recalls the gladiatorial shows of the Romans, the Spanish Inquisition and other instances of human cruelty to prove that the enjoyment of Tragedy is equally a sinister satisfaction of our natural malignity. This sort of reasoning simply confounds the issue. It is not that there may not be certain individuals who go to Tragedy for sympathy or malevolence, but the real question is whether satisfaction of such a practical or moral nature is exactly the same thing as the pleasure proper to Tragedy.

But philosophers and critics are often led astray by what might be called the lure of simplicity. After a careful perusal of various treatises on Tragedy, one is likely to have the impres-

sion of finding oneself in an intricate maze: each path promises the way out, but it leads always to an impasse. The confusion is worst confounded by the fact that some theories are diametrically opposed to one another and yet we cannot honestly say that one is entirely wrong and the other entirely right. But the authors themselves are all quite confident of their own infallibility and of the falsehood of others. Amid so much confusion, who has the courage to announce a new theory of his own without running the risk of being contradicted by his fellow-writers? The root of all this trouble lies in the abuse of an abstract logical notion of causality. «Every effect has a cause; every cause has an effect. One cause, one effect», so teaches every logician, and so believes Polonius when he rejoices for having discovered the «cause» of Hamlet's madness. It seems so obvious a truth that any distrust of it would be nothing short of absurd. So when a writer on any particular problem finds himself at the cross-roads, he would turn one way or the other without any hesitation and without any guilt in conscience. He would refuse obstinately to hear of any other view on the matter, for that would imply the admission of the plurality of causes. But unfortunately in a world like ours where every event is inextricably related to an infinite mass of other events and where the whole determines the parts, there are no more isolated solitary causes than there are isolated solitary effects. If this is true of the material world, it is even more so of the mental world. Both isolated causes and isolated effects are phantoms created by formal logic and atomistic psychology; they never exist in actual mental life. Take the problem of comedy and laughter for example. Numerous solutions have been proposed, who is on the right track, Plato, Hobbes, Kant, Schopenhauer, Bergson or Freud? Is laughter due to malevolence, «sudden glory», incongruity, economy of force, social chastisement at individual deformity or to some other cause? The abstract logical notion of causality would force us to take side with one or the other and leaves no middle course. But truth lies elsewhere. James Sully

after examining the different views on the subject, comes to this conclusion: «Theories of the ludicrous have again and again broken down from attempting to find one uniform cause in a domain where the operation of «Plurality of causes» is particularly well-marked» (3). How simple a truth and yet how long is the way to it! Here one feels to breathe once more in the open air! Substitute the word «tragic» for «ludicrous» in the passage just quoted, and you have an exact notion of the situation in which we find ourselves with regard to the problem of Tragedy.

IV.

The enjoyment of Tragedy is a complex phenomenon to which no single cause can be assigned as sufficient. This explains the fact that, though none of the previous theories of Tragedy can be taken as satisfactory, yet almost every one of them has some grain of truth in it. They are not so much false as inadequate. The realization of this fact has led us to the conviction that the best way of studying the problem of tragic pleasure is to examine impartially previous theories and sift out what is true in each of them. In this way we may hope to form a comprehensive synthetic view in which prejudices are wiped out and contradictions reconciled. Nothing entirly new can be said on so old a topic as Tragedy. To guard ourselves against any misunderstanding, we would make it clear at once that in the following pages we shall not expound any entirely new theory of our own. As our sub-title has indicated, our main purpose is to give «a critical study of various theories of tragic pleasure». Those who look for novelty or originality will be greatly disappointed. The deduction of certain one-sided theories to their absurd logical conclusions, the analysis of the tragic into the combined effect of the sublime and the piteous, the discussion of the conversion of pain into pleasure, the examination of the meaning of tragic catharsis, these and a few other minor points are all that can be claimed for the present

thesis as something more or less original. Perhaps even in these points we may have been anticipated by previous writers, but not to our limited knowledge. What is then our excuse for undertaking to write on the subject? A word may be said by way of apology. The advancement of learning may be effected either by the discovery of something which is unknown before, or by the examination,re-estimation and synthesization of what has been already said. Perhaps in sciences less exact than mathematics and physics, the latter achievement is just as important as the former. For theories are generally like photographs taken from some circumscribed points of veiw, sometimes they may even only give some unimportant aspects of the object represented. To form a clear notion of the object in all its three dimensions, we have to compare all the photographs taken at different angles. Now a work of this kind has not been done with the problem of Tragedy. It is to this task we address ourselves in the present thesis. It is manifestly a stereoscopic view of the subject and nothing else.

We shall discuss in turn how far aesthetic contemplation, malevolence, sympathy, moral sense, optimistic and pessimistic out-looks of life, the effect of emotional relief, the feeling of vitality, the gratification of intellectual curiosity and other factors can be relied upon to account for the pleasure we take in Tragedy. We shall try do reduce, if possible, these factors to some common denominators. But when «plurality of causes» appears admissible, we shall not falsify concrete experience by sticking to some one abstract dogma. We have no interest to serve. We shall base our argument mainly on concrete facts, trying neither to employ any larger metaphysical premise to warrant our conclusion on Tragedy, nor to use any theory of Tragedy to support some pre-conceived philosophical doctrine. Our method will be critical and synthetic.

The materials on which we are going to base our argument may be divided under three headings: —

(I). The masterpieces of Tragedy. — These must be taken as the documents of primary importance. Any discussion of Tra-

gedy must take both ancient and modern tragedies into consideration. Schopenhauer, we remember, rejects Greek tragedy as coming short of the tragic ideal on the ground that the heroes and heroines of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides do not always deny the Will-to-live as his fovourite theory requires. Hegel, on the other hand, expounds a theory which can hardly apply to the works of the moderns. In such cases we would rather take side with the tragic poets themselves than try to save any one-sided theories cherished by philosophers.

(II). Opinions and Impressions concerning Tragedy as recorded in books and journals: These fall under four sub-headings:

(a). Those of the tragic poets themselves such as Corneille's «Discours», «Préfaces», etc.; Racine's «Préfaces», Schiller's «Aesthetical Essays», Hugo's Preface to «Cromwell» and other works of similar nature. These are generally the defense of the practice of their authors. Though they are often biased by individual ideosyncracies and literary conventions, they often show an insight which none but the poets could have. They are particularly valuable for us if we want to have a glimpse of the poet's mind in the act of creating a great tragedy.

(b). Those of the spectators, readers, editors, reviewers and lecturers, such as Johnson's «Preface to Shakespeare», Diderot's «Paradoxe sur le comédien», Lessing's «Hamberg Dramaturgie», Schlegel's «Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature», Prof. Bradley's «Lectures on Shakespearean Tragedy», «The English Dramatic Critics» recently assembled by James Agates, etc. These works enable us to understand the mind of men of fine sensibility and high literary culture in the act of appreciating tragedies. Literary convention and individual ideosyncracies are again to be carefully distinguished from genuine enjoyment.

(c). Those of the actors and actresses, — Here unfortunately the bibliography is rather meagre, for great players do not often write books on their particular art. But the gap is sometimes filled by the works of critics and biographers which record indi-

rectly the personal views of great actors and actresses. Such interesting documents as Hamlet's advice to the players, Percy Fitzgerald's «Life of David Garrick», Sarah Bernhardt's «Memoires», André Antoine's «Mes Souvenirs» etc., are especially valuable for us; as they reveal the mind of great artists in the act of performing tragedies.

(d), Those of the philosophers, such as Aristotle's «Poetics», Hume's Essay on «Tragedy», Rousseau's «Lettre sur le Spectacle», Hegel's «Philosophy of Art», Schopenhauer's «The world as will and Idea», Nietzsche's «Birth of Tragedy» etc.. As our main purpose is to examine critically the theories expounded in these works, they will form one of the principal classes of our material.

(III). Personal Impressions. — As psychology is the science of mind as well as of external behaviour, introspective evidences should never be ignored, whatever the American Behaviorists may say against them. In aesthetic response especially one can never do away with the subjective element. As the old saying goes, there is no arguing about taste. In the end a writer who holds some view on any aesthetic problem must first feel sure that it squares with his own personal experiences. As Clive Bell has well observed, «only those for whom art is a constant source of passionate emotion can possess the data from which profitable theories may be deduced» (4). Any aesthetic theory without some personal aesthetic experience as its basis would be nothing short of dishonesty. In the present thesis, we apologize, therefore, for drawing occasionally on our own personal impressions. Writing on a «genre» of literature which is almost unknown to China (for reasons indicated in Chapter XII), we are fully conscious of our drawbacks and incompetence. But on the other hand, unshackled by traditional ideas and patriotic motives, we can perhaps look on the problem in a more detached manner and from a fresher point of view than some European writers. Our interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of pity and fear and their catharsis will per-

haps be looked on with amused disdain by classical scholars, while our disparaging remarks on certain modern tragic poets are likely to arouse dissension from other quarters. The only excuse for putting forword these somewhat heretic views is that they are formed after considerable examination of concrete facts. We are aware, however, of the danger of relying too much on subjective impressions which are notoriously one-sided and often erroneous. We shall try, therefore, to corroberate our personal impressions with the views of those whose learning, judgment and taste are better than ours.

CHAPTER II.

AESTHETIC ATTITUDE AND THE THEORY OF «PSYCHICAL DISTANCE» AS APPLIED TO TRAGEDY.

I.

Tragedy, in spite of its origin in religious rites, is pre-eminently a form of art, and the contemplation of Tragedy an aesthetic activity. A theory of Tragedy pre-supposes, therefore, certain general aesthetic principles. Before entering upon our specific task, it is perhaps advisable to give a succinct account of the characteristics of general aesthetic experience.

What is, then, an aestehic experience?

Setting aside for the moment all questions of external influences and relations and dealing with the aesthetic experience in the abstract, we may say that it is the contemplation of an object, whether in art or in nature, for its own sake. It differs on the one hand from the ordinary practical or moral activities in that it is neither motivated by any desire to satisfy a practical need, nor followed by any activity which leads to some external end.

On the other hand, it differs also from the scientific attitude in that it involves no conceptual thinking such as relating the object in view to a series of other objects by the links of cause and effect, and in that, though equally disinterested, it is accompanied by an intense emotional glow which is often detrimental to scientific reasoning.

To give a simple example, let us suppose a merchant, a botanist and a poet looking at a primrose at the same time. If each of them is true o his mental habit, the same flower will give three different impressions and call forth three different attitudes. The merchant, always a profit-maker, will calculate the price it could fetch in the market and bargain with the gardener for it. The botanist will count its petals and styles, attribute the cause of its flourishing state to good soil, classify it and give it a name in Latin. But a poet is a simple fellow to whom the little flower is a world in itself. He focuses his attention on it and forgets everything else. Instantly the little flower becomes an animate being, smiles to him and solicits his sympathy. In a moment of aesthetic rapture, he identifies himself with it and participates in its life and feeling. Here we have the practical, the scientific and the aesthetic attitude respectively. This broad distinction does not, of course, exclude the possibility that every one of us may be a practical man, a scientist and a poet at different moments. But when one is in his poetic moment, i.e. in the moment of aesthetic contemplation, one cannot be a practical man and a scientist at the same time; one must leave one's practical and scientific interests behind, if it is only for the moment.

The non-practical nature of aesthetic experience was emphasized by Kant, who described it as «disinterested contemplation». «The satisfaction connected with our idea of the existence of an object», wrote he, «is called interest. This satisfaction is therefore always related to the faculty of desire, either as affecting it or as necessarily connected with what affects it. But when the question is whether a thing be beautiful, we do not want to know

whether anything depends or can depend, for us or for anybody else, on the existence of the object, but only how we estimate it in mere contemplation» (1). In other words, aesthetic activity is free, independent of practical necessities. This idea of «freedom» has led Schiller and Spencer to regard aesthetic activity as an overflow of «surplus energy» and relate it to the play-impulse. In art as in play, there is a sense of illusion or «make-believe». An ideal world, in a moment of concentrated attention, attains to the full strength and vividness of reality.

The non-conceptual nature of aesthetic perception, which was also pointed out by Kant, has been emphasized by most modern philosophers, especially by Croce. The Italian aesthetician defines artistic activity as «the intuition of pure form». Intuition is a mental activity previous to, and independent of, reasoning or conceptual thinking. It is «the creation of an image». «Conceptual knowledge», says Croce, «in its pure form of philosophy, is always realistic. That is to say, it aims at distinguishing reality from unreality. ....But intuition just means the absence of distinction between reality and unreality, it is the imagery as a mental picture, the pure idealism of imagination» (2).

Conceptual knowledge may be described as the knowledge of relations, it relates one object to a series of other objects either in terms of cause and effect, or in terms of class and species. Aesthetic perception differs from conceptual knowledge precisely in that it refuses to see an object in its relation to other objects. So it may be described as the «isolation» of the object, as has been done by R. Haman and H. Münsterberg (3). The whole field of consciousness is monopolized by the isolated object. It is, as Bergson has pointed out, a state of mind, which resembles the hypnotic trance.

As the whole attention is concentrated on an isolated object, the distinction between the subject and the object is obliterated in consciousness. There is an idenifiction of the two. This phenomenon has been well described by Schopenhauer. In aesthetic

experience, he says, the subject «ceases to consider the where, the when, the why and the whither of things, and looks simply and solely at the WHAT». Then, «he loses himself in the object, i.e. forgets even his individuality, his will, and only continues to exist as the pure subject, the clear mirror of the object, so that it is as if the object alone were there without anyone to perceive it, and he can no longer separate the perceiver from the perception, but both have become one, because the whole consciousness is filled with one sensuous picture» (4).

As the ego and the non-ego are identified, there is a natural tendency on the one hand to project subjective feeling into the object. The former activity gives rise to what Ruskin has called «Pathetic Fallacy», a phenomenon described by Lipps as «Einfühlung» or «empathy»; the latter activity gives rise to what Groos has called «innere Nachahmung» or inner imitation. By empathy, an insensate object becomes sensate, it is personified, it begins to have feelings, emotions and activities. Thus we say «the mountain rises», «waves dance»... «The doric column upbirts itself», «The lilies and roses sighed for the dawn» etc. (5). By inner Imitation, the subject participates in the life of external objects and moulds his own feelings, emotions and activities after them (6). Thus we feel proud at the sight of a mountain or a lion, take a slanting pose after the Venus of Milos, or as Lotze has well expressed it, «identify our life with that of the slender shoots which swell and stretch forth, feeling in our soul the delight of the branches which droop and poise delicately in mid-air» (7).

These are the principal characteristics of aesthetic experience in general. From these general characteristics modern aestheticians have drawn certain conclusions which are much debated, but which are of supreme importance for our present purpose.

(1) As aesthetic contemplation is a highly concentrated state of mind, it is incompatible with the association of ideas. The attack on associationism in aesthetics may be traced back to the Kantian

separation of «free» and «dependent» beauty; and it has been carried on with increasing vigour by the formalists, especially those who theorize on music, e.g. Hanslick and Gurney. They hold that art should make direct appeal to our senses, and the «representative» or associative element should be reduced to its minimum. The weightiest complaint against the intervention of assoctiation in aesthetic contemplation is that the association of ideas is notoriously capricious, fluctual and chaotic. It lacks the inner-necessity and harmonious order which are essential to art. It leads the mind astray instead of focusing its glance on the aesthetic object itself. For instance, when you are listening to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, your mind wanders to green meadows, bright streams and singing birds, and you are highly pleased. But what you enjoy are the associated images of pastoral scenery and not the music itself.

(2) The aesthetic and the critical attitude cannot be maintained at one and the same moment, as criticism involves both conceptual thinking and association of ideas. To criticize is to judge, and that is to apply general principles to particular cases. It is essentially a scientific or a philosophic act. When we are enchanted by the sight of, let us say, a beautiful flower, there is a moment in which we suspend all mental activities and contemplate simply its sensuous appearance in a state of trance. In such a state of mind, we have no time to pass judgment and say: «it is beautiful» or «it is ugly» any more than to say: «it is a favourite flower of my wife» or «Wordsworth wrote a poem on it». The moment when we come to say such things, the spell has been broken, and we have transported ourselves from the magic wonderland to the world of science and business. «The poet dies in the critic», as Croce has well put it.

(3) The distinction between the aesthetic and the critical attitude undermines the foundation of the so-called «hedonistic aesthetics», generally connected with the names of Alexander Bain, Grant Allen and R. Marshall. Starting from the undeniable

fact that the beautiful is always pleasant, they arrive at the unwarranted conclusion that beauty is a kind of pleasure. Now this hedonistic view of beauty is logically fallacious, for the proposition that the beautiful is pleasant is not reversible; and psychologically false, for when we are absorbed in the contemplation of a beautiful object, we hardly pause to reflect that it is pleasant. It is only when we have awakened from the aesthetic trance that we begin to say to ourselves: «it is pleasant» or «I like it». The awareness of aesthetic pleasure, like the critical judgment, is only an afterthought. To make pleasure, which is only an effect, the essential quality of beauty is surely to put the cart before the horse.

4) For the same reason, aesthetic experience is independent of moral considerations. To pass moral judgments is to assume a critical attitude, and that is to break away from the white heat of emotional glow and think in cold blood like a philosopher. Like the association of ideas, it leads the mind to wander away from the object itself to something alien to it. A work of art may have a moral value or even a definite moral purpose. But when we enjoy it aesthetically, such moral value or purpose is kept in the background. The moment when you ask yourself whether the «Divine Comedy» or «Madame Bovary» is moral or immoral, or whether the death of Antigone or Cordelia satisfies the sense of justice, you are no longer in the domain of aesthetic experience, but have assumed the function of a legislator or a police-magistrate (8).

II.

The outline of the general aesthetic principles just given may be taken to represent the main current of European Aesthetic thought from Kant to Croce. It is manifestly formalistic. On the subjective side it reduces aesthetic perception to a pure elementary intuition prior to any conceptional thinking and even to any comprehension of meaning; on the objective side, it reduces

the aesthetic object to its bare sensuous appearance without any intellectual content.

Now such a formalistic view of the aesthetic experience will never convince the plain man in the street .In spite of its logical rigidity and precision, it has an inherent weakness. It deals with the aesthetic experience in the abstract, detaches it from the context of life as a whole, and reduces it into its simplest elements by a strict logical analysis. The trouble is that when you have so reduced it, it is almost impossible to re-fit it in the context of life again. Pure intuition of merely sensuous appearance is an ideal seldom realized in actual concrete experience. You have put a ban on conceptual thinking, but appreciation always presupposes understanding and no work of art is meaningless. So it is with the association of ideas. Art draws its material from life, so it can only be interpreted through the medium of life's experiences. The application of past experiences to the interpretation of present events always makes use of the association of ideas. Empathy, for example, would be impossible without it. You look at a flower, you fancy that it is smiling or weeping, could you deny that association plays its part there? According to certain French aestheticians, «poetic pleasure» is nothing else than «un jeu d'images librement systématisées pour la satisfaction de l'affectivité profonde» (9). Again ,you refuse moral sense to have a hand in art, but it is always a troublesome intruder. Great art has never been immoral. Though we do not introduce moral considerations in a moment of ecstasy, moral sense does exert a decisive influence before that moment has come. The aesthetic moment would never come, if moral sense had not been somehow satisfied or left undisturbed. Certain subjects are in their nature so offensive to our moral sense that any shadow of aesthetic pleasure would be driven out by disgust and indignation. The scene in «King Lear» in which Cornwall and Regan pluck out the eyes of Gloucester is an example — for certain spectators at least (10).

Life is an organic whole in which the different parts are so inextricably interwoven together that you cannot detach any one of them without damaging all the rest. It is not like a brick-house which you can pull down and build up again by simply laying the dislocated bricks in their original positions. In life, especially in mental life, though the whole consists of partfs, the sum of parts does not make up the whole. That is why there is always a danger of falsifying the nature of mental activities by applying to them a purely analytic method. Analytic method is generally mechanical, and life is not a machine or a mosaic. The error of Formalistic aesthetics is similar to that of Atomistic Psychology. They both analyse mental life to its simplest elements, but forget that no living organism can survive a vivisection. The criticism of the «Gestalt» psychologists against Atomistic Psychology applies equally well to Formalistic aesthetics. Pure intuition, like simple sensation, is a rare phenomenon in actual life, though logically we may not, perhaps, deny its existence altogether (10).

As the formalists detach art and aesthetic experience from the context of life, they naturally do not trouble themselves to inquire in what way life as a whole may exert its influence on art and aesthetic experience. They push the purity and autonomy of aesthetic experience to such an extent that they do not think it necessary to ask themselves under what conditions such a pure aesthetic experience may be initiated and maintained. Every person is endowed with the faculty of intuition and every object possesses its sensuous appearance. How is it that one person differs from another in seeing things aesthetically? How is it, again, that one object differs from another in affecting us aesthetically? The moment when you have entered an aesthetic trance, it is very well for you to say that you see the object only with intuition and the object presents to you only its sensuous appearance. So far what you say is true. But it is only a description of the phenomenon, you have not explained it, you have not determined the conditions under which you can enter such an aesthetic experience.

The question is not to be answered by simply saying that the condition of an aesthetic experience is the beauty of the object in view. For, on the Formalist's own assumption, beauty does not lie in the object ready-made so that one may pick it up at will, it is created with every fresh aesthetic experience. Beauty as a product of aesthetic experience cannot exist prior to it and be its condition.

It may be a philosopher's privilege to deal with things in the abstract, but a psychologist has to deal with concrete experience as a whole, notice the interrelations of its constituting parts and trace the cause and effect of each of them. For such a study a much wider criterion than the Formalist's formula: «Intuition of pure form» is needed. Now such a wider criterion is supplied, in our opinion, by the Theory of «Psychical Distance». The great merit of this theory is that, while it emphasizes, as formalism does, the purity of aesthetic experience, it does not neglect the conditions favourable or detrimental to its initiation and maintenance.

The theory of «Psychical Distance» may be traced back to German aesthetics. Schopenhauer spoke already of aesthetic experience as «relinquishing the common way of looking at things». The word «detachment» as usually employed to describe aesthetic contemplation implies also the idea of distance. According to Prof. Delacroix, Müller Freienfels uses the very word «distance» in connection with aesthetic attitude (11). But the idea of «Distance» is nowhere so fully elaborated as by an English psychologist, Edward Bullough, in his article on «Psychical Distance as a factor in art and an aesthetic Principle» (12). Bullough writes under the strong influence of formalism, he does not seem to realize the full significance of his theory in breaking down the narrow confines of formalistic aesthetics and in extending the Psychology of art to cover a much larger field than the abstract pure aesthetic experience. Those who are familiar with his theory will find that the idea of «Distance» as developed in the present

Chapter, though mainly echoing his view ,has been extended in such a way as he might not have foreseen it.

«Distance» may be described as a metaphorical expression for the detachment of the aesthetic object from its associations with everyday practical life. Things beautiful generally have «remoteness» as one of their characterestics. A traveller from the East who finds himself for the first time in Europe generally has the impression that every thing there that is unfamiliar to him has a peculiar charm of its own, even a basket, a windmill, or the head-dress of a peasant woman looks much more pretty to him than to a native inhabitant. A similar impression occurs to a Westerner who lands for the first time in China or Japan. Things near and familiar generally appear to us as matter-of-fact, vulgar and even ugly. But put them away at a distance and look at them in a detached spirit, they may become strange, charming and even beautiful. Spatial distance is then favourable to the initiation of aesthetic attitude.

The same thing may be said of temporal distance. Antiquity often confers a kind of beauty to the most ordinary objects. The Greek vase immortalized by the famous *Ode* of Keats, was to the contemporaries of Theocritus primarily a utensil for wine, oil and such like household commodities. The phrase «once upon a time» introduces us at once to the fairy land of poety and romance. Even a crime or a wicked deed may lose its repulsive nature with the lapse of time. Who would now blame Orestes for his parricide or summon Helen of Troy to the court of justice for her elopement? These bygone personages who at one time awakened violent passions, drew forth deep sighs and warm tears, made the fame of many a champion and caused the ruin of great cities, are to us now but some historical marionettes crowned with aureales of myths, loftily remote and intensely fascinating.

The application of the word «distance» to time and space is of course literal and legitimate, but it may be also used in a figurative sense. We may insert a distance, so to speak, between an

object and our own practical interest. Here we may illustrate with Bullough's own example. Imagine a fog at sea. For a seafarer it is an experience of acute unpleasantness, prophesizing danger and causing anxiety and discomfort. But put aside all practical considerations and focus our attention on the phenomenon itself, it becomes a source of intense relish and enjoyment. The transparent veil which blurs the division of sky and water, the strange solitude and remoteness from the world, the dead silence which suggests at once repose and terror — all these contribute to make the scene an extremely beautiful picture.

In all these instances, it is a difference of outlook due to the insertion of distance that makes an ordinary object beautiful. A phenomenon or an event is allowed to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends, and we look at it objectively and disinterestedly. A street, for instance, which is indifferent to a native inhabitant, looks beautiful to a stranger, because with the former it has become the centre of habitual practical associations, it is a street where lives a friend or an enemy, it is a sign-post to a certain bank or a certain baker's shop etc.. ; whereas with the latter, such habitual associations have not yet been formed, so he can look at it just as a street and nothing more, i.e. at its mere sensuous appearance. In other words, the stranger is in a better position to assume an aesthetic attitude towards the street than a native dweller, «distancing» is more easily achieved by the former than by the latter.

«This distanced view of things» as Bullough justly remarks, «is not, and cannot be our normal outlook. As a rule, experiences constantly turn the same side towards us, namely that which has the strongest practical force of appeal. ....The sudden view of things form their reverse, usually unnoticed, side comes upon us as a revelation, and such revelations are precisely those of art».

So far there is nothing new in the theory of Distance; it is only a figurative re-statement of the formalistic view which we have outlined in the opening section of the present Chapter. But

it goes further to provide a criterion for determining the conditions of aesthetic experience.

By «distance», as we have said, the simple contemplation of an object becomes possible. But «it does not mean that the relation between the self and the object is broken to the extent of becoming impersonal». «On the contrary it describes a personal relation often highly emotionally coloured». But the personal character of the relation has been «filtered». «It has been cleared of the practical concrete nature of its appeal, without, however, thereby losing its original constitution».

This «personal» but «distanced» relation between the subject and the object leads Bullough to formulate a principle which forms the most valuable part of his contribution, i-e. The «Antinomy of Distance».

As the relation between the subject and the object is «personal», the success and intensity of the appeal of the object would stand in direct proportion to the completeness with which the object corresponds to our intellectual peculiarities and the ideosyncracies of our experience. The more it appeals to our deep-hidden desires and instincts, the more it concords with our past experience, the more it would attract our attention, faciliate our understanding, arouse our interest and enlist our sympathy. If it is too remote from human experience or too alien to human nature, it would remain incomprehensible and for that reason, unappreciated.

On the other hand, as the relation between the subject and the object must be «distanced», the concordance of objective phenomenon with subjective experiences should not be so complete as to tie the subject down to the practical attitude, i-e. to lead to a loss of distance. The more the object excites our desires and recalls to us our own personal experiences, the more we direct our thought on ourselves, on our own joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, instead of contemplating the object itself.

So there is a contradiction here, and it is this contradiction that constitutes the «Antinomy of Distance». A simple example will make the meaning clear.

Suppose a young man who loves a girl betrothed to another man, suffers all the regret and despair that usually accompany unsuccessful love, and, weary of life, ponders on suicide. Suppose that he happens to read the melancholy story of «The sorrows of Young Werther» or see it dramatized on the stage. He will be in a better position than anybody else to understand and appreciate the situation, character, conduct and mental suffering of Werther, as they correspond very closely to his own personal experiences. But as a matter of fact, such a close correspondance will probably render him acutely conscious of his own sorrow and despair. By a reversal of perspective, he will no longer think of Werther and Charlotte, but of himself and his lost love. He will no longer be able to appreciate Goethe's story as a work of art. It serves merely to press the trigger of his emotional fire and leads to a wild explosion.

This is an example of loss of distance due to a too close correspondance of subjective experiences and objective fictitious events. But persons differ widely in their ability to maintain distance. Goethe, we remember, wrote the story of «Werther» on hearing the news of the suicide of Jerusalem who had been disappointed in love, at a time when he himself broke with Charlotte and thought of suicide. He felt what many a young man has felt, but he did what none but a great artist could have done. He projects his personal experiences and creates a work of art. This instance shows that a distanced view of things is essential to artistic creation as well as to appreciation. It explains also why many persons who imagine themselves to have enough personal experiences to write a poem or a novel and yet cannot manage to do it. «Pour se rendre à soi-même son émotion», writes Prof. Delacroix, «il faut que l'artiste l'extériorise en quelque sorte et

devienne imitateur de lui-même» (3). «Exteriorization» is another name for the creation of distance.

Distance depends, then, on two factors: the subject and the object. The subject, in order to achieve distance, must have by natural endowment or by habitual training, a certain degree of artistic aptitude. Persons differ widely in this respect. There are some who simply cannot detach things from their practical significance, other can do it quite easily and among these are poets and artists. On the other hand, the object, in order to induce an aesthetic attitude, must be more or less remote from reality and actuality so as not to arouse practical interests too readily. Generally speaking, things which are already distanced in time and space are more easily distanced than those wich are closely connected with our passions and activities. One is often too overwhelmed, for example, with sorrow at the death of a beloved person to make an immediate use of it in a work of art. The artist cannot, so to speak, strike the iron while it is hot. It is only after a lapse of time that events of overwhelming joy or sorrow are filtered through recollection and reflexion and enter into a song or into a memoir. Poety, says Wordsworth, is «emotion recollected in tranquillity».

The secret of the success of art lies then in a nice adjustment of distance. «What is both in production and appreciation most desirable», says Bullough, «is the utmost decrease of distance without its disappearance». «Over-distancing», a fault of idealistic art, often implies incomprehensibility and lack of interest; «underdistancing, a fault of naturalistic art, makes it difficult to detach from a work of art its everyday practical associations. Art must maintain a certain degree of distance, so it is essentially formalistic and anti-realistic. The degree of distance varies with different forms of art. Music, the most formalistic of all arts, reduces the representative element to its minimum, and maintains the greatest distance possible. Modern European opera is a desperate attempt to add content to music, it tries to combine two

things which are hardly compatible; consequently it spoils the music and distracts attention from the drama. In sculpture, the danger of losing distance is very great as it represents human figures in a life-like manner and in three dimensions. To avoid this danger, the ancient Egyptians used stereotyped ans conventional attitudes, and modern sculptors clothe contemporary figures in ancient style, and keep the suggested movement at a minimum. In painting the two dimensional character supplies distance, the frame in which a picture is put in also exercises an isolating influence. The post-impressionists sometimes seem to carry distance too far, as they often distort the natural shapes of objects in such a violent manner that one cannot recognize what they are at first sight.

These instances are sufficient to show that distance is an important factor in art and aesthetic experience. The notion of distance is very valuable to general aesthetics, as it gives us a criterion by which we can determine the conditions under which aesthetic attitude may be initiated and maintained. Conceptual knowledge, personal experinces, association of ideas, moral sense, instincts and desires and many other factors, which have been discarded by the Formalists as alien to aesthetics, do make and mar our aethetic experience. The «Golden Mean» is an ideal in art as well as in life. There is a limit beyond which both the presence and the absence of these factors are detrimental to the effect of art. In other words, they each should be placed at an appropriate distance.

III.

We have dwelt on general aesthetics at a length which seems unjustifiable at first sight, but it will be justified in the end. What we are going to say about the Psychology of Tragedy in particular will depend much on what we have said about the Psychology of Art in general. In the present Chapter we have done once for all

the analysis of aesthetic experience, its preceding conditions, and its relations to other forms of mental activities; in the subsequent Chapters, we shall apply these general principles to the problem of tragic pleasure. They will serve as a touchstone on which the validity of various previous theories will be tested.

Let it be understood at once that we intend to take a large view of our subject. Neither the purely Formalistic Aesthetics of Kant and Croce, nor the manifestly moralistic aesthetics of Plato, Hegel and Tolstoi can serve as the basis of a sound Psychology of Tragedy. Our business is not only to describe the enjoyment of Tragedy as an isolated pure aesthetic phenomenon, but also to explain its cause and effect and determine its relations to various activities in life as a whole. This has led us to extend the sphere of the traditional orthodox aesthetics, which isolates the aesthetic experience and emphasizes its purity and autonomy, to cover a much wider ground so as to include the relations between aesthetic experience and other mental activities as well. We have found the Theory of «Psychical Distance» a useful criterion by which such relations may be ascertained.

For the rest of the present Chapter, we shall discuss in a general way the idea of Distance as applied to Tragedy.

There is a danger of losing Distance in dramatic art in general, for it represents human actions and emotions through the medium of actual human beings. It tends to be realistic and produce in the mind of the spectators the illusive impression that they are moving in a real world. It has many disadvantages compared with other forms of art. It lacks the static serenity of sculpture and painting, for it represents human figures, not in dumbshow, but in animated conversations and violent movements. Unlike music, it relies mainly on its «representative» appeal, it must tell the story of human events which are likely to give rise to habitual association of ideas and call forth a more or less pratical attitude. The actors and actresses are ordinary men and women just as we are; they laugh, weep, drink wine, make enemies and

behave themselves in a thousand different ways just as we do. The consequence is that we tend to behave towards them, as naïve children and county folks generally do, as sympathetic fellow-beings, take fictitious joys and sorrows for real ones, think of revenge against the villain and clap hands in congratulation to long-tried lovers who, in spite of numerous misfortunes and obstacles, have come eventually to celebrate their happy marriage. Naturally one is no longer maintaining an aesthetic attitude, the distance has been lost.

Besides this, dramatic art has a further disadvantage in employing actual human beings as its medium, that is the readiness on the spectator's part to assume a critical attitude. In the plastic arts the artists do not thrust themselves upon our attention; the works done, they modestly withdraw themselves to the background. Confronted with a picture or a statue, unless we are historically minded, we seldom think of the artist at all. But in drama the actors and actresses are «artists» as well as the medium of an art. They appear to us both as Hamlet or Iphigenia and as the persons who play well or badly the part of Hamlet or Iphigenia. They are the artists who constantly stand and move before us and say to us, as it were, «Here is our work, judge and admire!» The prologue of most Elezabethan plays accentuates this feeling. We are introduced to «Romeo and Juliet», for example, by the following prelude:

> The fearful passage of their death-marked love, ...
> Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
> The which if you with patient ears attend,
> What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

Thus our sympathy is solicited for the actor as an artist and not as the character whom he personifies. This is especially so when we happen to know the artist. We are anxious for his success or failure. We applaud him or hiss him. Such a critical attitude is incompatible with the highly concetrated attention which is essential to the disinterested contemplation of any work of art.

Actors often feel flattered by loud applauses at the critical moment in the course of dramatic events, they ignore however that such appreciative expression is totally unaesthetic. In this respect a play read in private has an advantage over a play represented on the stage ,it avoids both the illusion due to the employment of actual human beings as medium and the critical attitude towards the actors and actresses. An awkward gesture or a slight fault in the declamation would spoil the dramatic effect of a whole scene; there is never such a dnager in reading a play. Many great masterpieces of Tragedy are better read than acted. «Prometheus Bound» or «King Lear», for example, would lose much of their suggestiveness and vastness on a modern stage. There are numerous ways of interpreting a play and the actors have to stick to one of them. So representation generally narrows down a great tragedy to a mere series of dramatic events workable for the actors and intelligible to the spectators.

Tragedy, more than other forms of drama tends to awaken moral sense and personal sentiments, because it is the most serious of all arts, and one canot take it as a joke like a farce or a comedy. The passions it portrays are primordial and affect all mankind without exceptions; the events it represents are generally terrible, and in presence of what is terrible man often becomes serious and meditative. He either makes general philosophical reflexions on the problems of life and death, good and evil, character and fate; or, if there is any resemblance of the tragic events to his own personal experience, becomes absorbed in his own sorrows and misfortunes, as a jalous husband at the representation of «Othello». He becomes what Jung has called an «introvert», whereas the enjoyment of Tragedy requires the objective attitude of an «extrovert».

With regard to the maintenance of distance, Tragedy as a form of dramatic art has, then, certain natural disadvantages compared with music and the plastic arts. But these disadvantages are generally counterbalanced by various devices of dramatic art. Let

us examine now a few of the more important devices by which life is «distanced» in Tragedy.

(1) Spatial and temporal remoteness. — The most obvious «distancing» device in Tragedy is to attribute the dramatic events to a remote period in history and lay the scenes in some distant countries. Greek tragedy generally draws its material from the Homeric poems and popular mythology. The origin of legends like the revolt of Prometheus against Zeus is buried in the mist of antiquity. Even the Trojan wars and their related episodes took place at least some six or seven centuries before Aeschylus and Sophocles won their prizes of Tragedy. Surrounded with a halo of sacredness and mystery, these «unhappy far-off things» had lost all the sordidness of ordinary actual events and bore no practical relation to the Athenian citizens. With the exception of the «Persians», which is perhaps only a «pièce d'occasion», contemporary events were seldom utilized by the tragic poets. In modern tragedy there is the same preference for old legends and stories. Shakespeare, who had no sympathy for classical rules, seldom introduced contemporary events into Tragedy, though his was an eventful time and he could not have ignored the tragic end of Mary Stuart, a theme which has been immortalized by Schiller. The only tragedy in which he treats comparatively modern events is «Othello», but he lays the scene in Italy and employs as its hero a black Moor whose origin no one knows exactly. When he returns to his native soil for materials, it is the earlier kings, such legendary figures as Lear and Macbeth, that attract his attention. The same thing cannot, perhaps, be said of those plays like «Richard II», «Henry VIII», which are usually grouped as «Histories». But then they can hardly be ranked among his great tragedies and even in them distance is achieved by other devices such as the presence of lyrical element and the exceptional nature of characters and situations wich are to be discussed presently. Corneille, like Shakespeare, had a particular bent for Roman history. His heroes are for the most part Romans, with

the exception of «Le Cid», a feudal knight and therefore a comparatively modern figure, but the event of the play is spatially «distanced» as it took place in Spain. Racine used chiefly the conventional themes of Greek tragedy, and, like his great rival, often resorted to Roman history. When he diverted from his habitual path, it was to the Turks, the Persians and the Jews that he looked for inspiration. He might even be regarded as the first exponent of the Theory of Distance. In his second Preface to «Bajazet», he apologizes for having treated a modern subject in the following words:

«A la vérité je ne conseillerais pas à un auteur de prendre pour sujet d'une tragédie une action aussi moderne que celle-ci, si elle s'était passée dans le pays où il veut faire représenter sa tragédie, ni de mettre des héros sur le théâtre qui auraient été connus de la plupart des spectateurs. Les personnages tragiques doivent être regardés d'un autre œil que nous ne regardons d'ordinaire les personnages que nous avons vus de si près. On peut dire que le respect que l'on a pour les héros augmente à mesure qu'ils s'éloignent de nous: *Major e longinquo reverentia*. L'éloignement des pays répare en quelque sorte la trop grande proximité des temps. Car le peuple ne met guère de différence entre ce qui est, si j'ose ainsi parler, à mille ans de lui, et ce qui en est à mille lieues».

What Racine means by «éloignement» is exactly what we mean by «distance». He has observed very well that the absence of temporal distance might be compensated by spatial distance, only he might have added that distance not only auguments respect, but also puts the dramatic events out of gear with contemporary practical life.

(2) The exceptional nature of characters, situations and actions. — Both the spatial and the temporal distance are devices common to art in general. In Tragedy, there is a further «distancing» factor ,that is the exceptional nature of its characters, situations and actions. The tragic hero is generally a man above the

average humanity. Some, like Prometheus and Hercules, are semi-divine beings; others, like Hippolytus, Antigone and Brutus, have an exceptonal nobility of mind; others again, like Macbeth, Rihcrad II and Cleopatra, though wicked persons, possess an immense force of will and have a touch of tragic grandeur. They are all built on a gigantic scale. There is always something extraordinary about them which would prevent the spectators from identifying themselves with them so far as hopes and fears for practical consequences are concerned. The situations in which these exceptional personages find themselves are again exceptional. Orestes was to kill his own mother, Oedipus to commit unintentionally hideous crimes ,Antigone to choose between impiety and disobedience to the state authority, Rodrigue to take vengeance on the father of his beloved, — to name only a few of the tragic situations. There is very little possibility that the average man and woman should suffer from similar misfortunes. Finally the unusual nature of tragic actions is even more striking. If we ordinary men lack the force and power of a tragic hero, we are also free from his incredible weakness. Many of the tragic situations, if transposed to actual life, would lead to much less unhappy consequences. Calamities would be avoided by foresight, prudence or compromise. Oedipus, for example, tried to evade the crime of parricide and killed nevertheless an old man who, in age as well as in position, might be, and was indeed, his father; he tried to evade the crime of incest and married nevertheless a widow, who, again, in age as well as in position, might be, and was indeed, his mother. An ordinary man in the place of Oedipus would have easily got himself out of the trouble by simply making a point not to kill any man at all and by keeping himself a celibate or taking a wife no older than himself. Similarly an ordinary man in the position of Hamlet would have either got himself reconciled with Claudius, or killed him at the first opportunity. Any old faher would have been more prudent than Lear, any jealous husband would have shown more discretion than Othello. Indeed in

most of the famous tragic situations the ordinary men would have behaved themselves differently and so avoided the catastrophe. All these factors — characters, situations and actions — combine to raise tragedy above the sphere of ordinary life.

(3) Artistic techniques and conventions. — Distance in Tragedy is further helped by certain techniques and conventions of dramatic art. Like all other forms of art, Tragedy is essentially artificial and formal. It insists on certain formal qualities such as unity, balance, constrast, appropriate distribution of acts and scenes, etc., which events in actual life never exhibit. In this connection a word may be said about the old problem of three unities. From the point of view of distance, the only unity that is of real importance is that of action. Tragedy shows only a section of life disentangled from the webs of its manifold interwoven relations. Complicated actions are not only unwieldy on the stage but also easily confused with real life. So the unity of action is really un-realistic and constitutes an important «distancing» device. But the unities of space and time stand on a different footing. They are generally defended on a naturalistic ground. It is untrue to nature, it has been argued, that a man should be born, get married and become father within the short span of two or three hours, and that one could be transported from the Palace of Ptolemies to the Promontary of Actium within thirty minutes. But these things are no more objectionable than that Brutus should fight against Caesar with only a handful of soldiers or that the Corinthians should send a shepherd as an ambassador to fetch Oedipus to their royal throne. Such things are indeed untrue to nature, but they contribute to the unity of action and help to maintain a distance between art and life. They prevent the spectators from being affected by the murder of Agamemnon or the death of Cordelia in the same way as they would be affected by the misfortunes of their next-door neighbors.

(4) Lyrical element. — It should not be forgotten that Tragedy was born of lyric poety and dance. It does not speak the

language of everyday life, but is generally written in verse. It is the highest form of poety and its poetical element forms another important «distancing» factor. Its dignified diction, its harmonious rhythm and melody, its rich images and radiant colours — all these help to raise the tragic events above the vulgarity of common humanity and relieve the horror which otherwise we should feel in them. The more terrible the situation is, the greater is the need for lyrical relief. In great tragedies «the pitch of poetry» often rises with the approach of climax. Hamlet's farewell to Horatio, Macbeth's great monologue about sleep delivered just after the murder of Duncan, Othello's address to the Venetian ambassadors before his suicide are some of the most typical instances. The stories of many great tragedies, if told in every-day prose, would be intolerable. This is one of the reasons why the reports of «beaux crimes» in newspapers do not give us the same impression as a tragedy; they lack its intense lyrical note.

The lyrical element predominates in Greek tragedy. It is especially connected with the Chorus, which is, as Schiller has remarked in his Preface to «The Bride of Messina», «a living wall which Tragedy draws round herself to guard her from contact with the world of reality and to preserve her ideal domain and poetical freedom». In modern European tragedy the purely lyrical element seems to have been much diminished. Only here and there do we find a song in the works of Shakespeare. Both Corneille and Racine use declamatory speech in Alexandrine verse throughout their tragedies. The modern opera seems to be a faint reminiscence of the Greek Chorus. But the two things are really different in spirit. The Greek Chorus stands aloof from the dramatic action and serves mainly to give lyrical relief, whereas modern opera-singers are the dramatic characters themselves and what they sing are very often really declamatory speeches with very little lyrical element in them. But in spite of this discrepency, the existence of opera shows that even the moderns are conscious of the necessity of mitigating the painful nature of tragic events

by means of poety and music. On the whole, dramatic language is tending towards realism. The abandon of lyrical songs has been followed by the abandon of verse alogether. The use of prose in Tragedy, proposed a century ago by Stendhal, has been gaining ground increasingly. It has often been asked whether there is any necessary connection between Tragedy and verse. The success of Ibsen, Strinberg, Maeterlink, D'Annunzio and other modern great masters forbids us to answer the question dogmatically. But two remarks may be offered. In the first place, historical evidences seem to point to the conclusion that the decline of Tragedy has always coincided with the decay of poetry. We need only witness Greece at the age of great philosophers, England immediately after the Elezabethan age, and France in the time of Rousseau and Voltaire. Secondly, even when a great modern master writes a tragedy in prose, he often endeavours to pass from pure prose levels and keep a poetry of phrase and rhythm of its own. To be convinced of this we need only go to Maeterlink's «Intérieur», D'Annunzio's «Dead City», or Singe's «Deirdre of the sorrows». The distance between dramatic language and the ordinary terms of conversation has been diminished, but it has not disappeared altogether.

(5) Supernatural Atmosphere. — In most great tragedies there is always an otherworld atmosphere. It heightens the tragic sense and keeps our imaginaion hovering in an ideal world. The Greek tragic poets had generally a consummate skill in creating such an atmosphere. An oracle from Delphi, a prophecy of Cassandra or Tiresias, or a presentiment of aged Chorus-singers flashes before our vision like a sudden light which illuminates for us a dark background much wider than the mere individual events enacted on the stage. It awakens in us a sense of mystery and a feeling of wonder. With the modenns Tragedy has become secular, but the supernatural has not entirely retreated from the scene. Take Shakespeare for example, the witches scene in Macbeth, the ghost scene in Hamlet, the tempest scene in «Julius Caesar»

and «King Lear» all give us the impression that there is an unearthly light flickering about the head of the doomed hero. The effect of the super-natural depends, of course, on the belief and faith of the audience. The prophecy of Oedipus at Colonus cannot affect us to-day as it affected the Greeks. Nor does the Ghost in Hamlet thrill us so much as it thrilled the Elezabethans. But in spite of this, the influence of the super-natural is still felt in many great masterpieces even in our age of science and rationalism. It does not appear to us in its old crude forms of corporal gods, ghosts witches etc., but has assumed a subtler and more indifinable shape, «half-visionary floating wisps of thought and feeling», as Prof. A. Nicoll has put it. Maeterlink's «Pelléas et Mélisande» offers us a good example. In it a strong earthly passion is distanced by a cold and weird setting where one seems to move in the shadow of dark-caverns never penetrated by sun-shine. «Fait-il trop triste ici?» Golaud asks Mélisande. «Il est vrai que ce château est très vieux et très sombre. .... Il est très froid et très profond. Et tous ceux qui l'habitent sont déjà vieux. Et la campagne peut sembler triste aussi, avec toutes ses forêts, toutes ses vieilles forêts sans lumière». A few touches like these remove all that is worldly from the dramatic action and create a land of haunted dreams over the gate of which are inscribed in big letters: «Whosoever enter here shall leave behind all worldly hopes and fears!»

(6) Stage-craft and scenery effect. — These form another factor in the maintenance of distance. The world is after all not a stage, and no one would confound the two things if the latter is constructed and decorated as it should be. The Greeks had no stage at all. Their theatre was little more than a dancing circle around an altar at the foot of some hill-side. If decorations were used, they were simple to the last degree. The actors in Greek drama were generally more-than-life-sized figures wearing high buskins and rigid masks. They spoke in heavy monotonous voices with the help of a mouth-piece. The Chinese theatre ,though pos-

sessing a stage, makes little use of scenery decorations. The actors, as in ancient Greece, wear high boots and painted masks. A character appears on the stage whenever he or she is wanted without being summoned by a messenger. If a chevalier waves his right arm, it is to be understood that he is riding a horse; when you see a maiden tapping with her fingers in the air, you are to know that she is knocking at a door. The action unfolds itself now in a country tavern and then in an imperial palace without any shifting of scenery and even without the dropping of a curtain. In modern Europe, the Elezabethan stage was equally crude and meagre in scenery decorations. A tavern was sometimes represented by a sign-post and the speaker of the prologue often informed the audience whether the event occurred in Verona or Athens. The same balcony on which one day stood the citizens holding parley with King John and Philip Augustus, was used another day for the scene in which Juliet bade farewell to Romeo. It is only since comparatively recent time that the European stage has made elaborate attempts at realistic setting. Paintings in two dimensions have been replaced by solid plastics, real walls and rocks for the actors to lean against. Acting, again, is conducted in a realistic manner. The actors of the Moscow Art Theatre pride themselves on their power of creating an illusion of real life. In England attempts have been made to «modernize» Shakespeare — not too successfully however. Realism seems to be the catchword of the age. One may wonder why one should go to the theatre if nothing is to be found there except a parody of real life. One feels some consolation, however, to find that great artists like Graig and Reinhardt are turning in a different direction and that in their settings beauty and suggestiveness are more sought for than realism.

In conclusion we may say, then, that realism is alien to the spirit of Tragedy. The misfortunes and calamities in Tragedy are never to be confounded with those in real life, for they are «distanced» by temporal and spatial remoteness, by the exceptional nature of the tragic characters, situations and actions, by artistic

conventions and techniques, by an intense lyrical note, by an other world atmosphere and finally by unrealistic but suggestive staging and acting. The tragic events are «filtered», as it were, after having passed through all these «distancing» factors and thereby lose their original crudeness and sordidness. In his Preface to «The Cenci» Shelley writes:

«This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events: so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring».

The same thing may be said of all tragedies. The terrible in Tragedy must be subjugated and transfigured by the power of art so that nothing is left of it except a vision of beauty and grandeur. Tragedy represents an idealized life or life set in an artifical frame. It is a work of art which does not exist ready-made in real life. Misfortunes and calamities are indeed abundant in the actual world, they are either sad or terrible, but they are seldom «tragic» in the strictest sense of the word. They are not «distanced» and «filtered» through the medium of art; they lack the ideal character and formal beauty of a great tragedy. It is therefore misleading to argue about Tragedy on the analogy of the sight of suffering in actual life, as it has been done by most writers.

CHAPTER III.

TRAGIC PLEASURE AND MALEVOLENCE.

I.

Having laid down the general aesthetic principles and pointed out the distinction between Tragedy as a work of art and the sight of actual suffering, we may now enter upon our main task, and examine some of the most important theories of tragic pleasure which have been put forward by previous writers, we shall start from the simplest of all, the Malevolence Theory.

From a common-sense point of view, to rejoice over the misfortunes of our fellow-beings is a clear sign of malignity, to take pleasure in the representation of tragic events is to rejoice over the misfortunes of others, and the conclusion is obvious. If we ourselves were tormented by jealousy and remorse, we would probably feel nothing but pain; but as it occurs to Othello, a black Moor to whom we are in no way related, it satisfies our cruel instinct and we weep for joy. So a great calamity is a source of pain when we ourselves are victims; but when it falls on others, it gives us the highest pleasure.

The emotional effect of a tragedy depends, then, on the spectator's awareness of the distinction between himself and the tragic hero. But opinions differ as to why such an awareness should be pleasurable.

Some would attribute the cause of tragic pleasure to the sense of safety, «sweet it is», says Lucretius, «when the winds are at work on the waters, to witness from the shore another's deep distress» (1). He goes on, however, to declare that this is not because we have any pleasure in the misfortunes of others, but because we congratulate ourselves for having escaped a similar calamity. This view has been endorsed by Prof Santayana. «The evil (in tragedy) may be felt», he writes, «but at the same time the sense that, great as it may be in itself, it cannot touch us, may stimulate extraordinarily the consciousness of our own wholeness» (2.) Man is always haunted by the dread of pain and this is quite natural in a world like ours where evils and miseries are abundant. Freedom from pain is the greatest blessing that man can expect. Tragedy enchants us because, in representing the distress and suffering of men and women who are in every other respect our superiors, it puts our own better fortune in high relief.

From this theory to the view that Tragedy awakens our sense of superiority there is no great gap. Indeed they are so closely related that the latter may be regarded as a corollary of the former. We feel that we are better favoured by Forune than the personages on the stage, we are born under more auspicious stars, and therefore we are superior to them. It is true that Tragedy portrays man above the average and that the tragic heroes and heroines are generally above us in social standing and in moral strength. But they are on that very account our worthy competitors in the high road of life. We do not like to air our high stature in a world of Lilliputs (3). Those who hold this view often point to the ultimate similarity between Tragedy and Comedy as a further support to their argument. Laughter, as Hobbes says, springs from the feeling of «sudden glory». We laugh because we suddenly discover

some weakness or deformity in the laughable object and thereby become aware of our own superiority. If this theory be accepted, the enjoyment of Tragedy would appear to be due to the same cause as the enjoyment of comedy.

All this is singular enough. But other writers view the matter in a light even more unfavourable to human nature. According to them, tragic pleasure is not so much due to the sense of safety or self-superiority as to the savage thirst for bloodshed and the infliction of pain that we inherit from our remote ancestors. M. Herckenrath has put the question rather crudely:

«Le plaisir que nous procure la représentation d'une tragédie ne paraît-il point au premier abord une jouissance barbare? Nous regardons la souffrance avec avidité, au lieu d'en détourner les yeux. Ce plaisir serait donc de même nature que celui que certains individus éprouvent à voir abattre un animal où à assister à une rixe sanglante?»

He answers this question in the affirmative:

«Ce plaisir, réel, que l'on prend à voir la souffrance, me paraît résulter des dispositions cruelles engendrées dans la race par la guerre, autrefois nécessité et souvent état habituel des tribus et peuplades. La nécessité de se défendre et d'infliger des injures a fait naître le plaisir de les infliger. ....Chez le plus grand nombre, l'instinct féroce s'est affaibli; mais il en faut chercher les vestiges dans le goût des spectacles sanglants, courses de taureaux, combats de chiens, combats de coqs, chasse, ou des récits des scènes atroces» (4).

M. Herckenrath's words were quoted with approval by a more prominent French writer, M. Faguet, to whose name the malevolence theory is generally associated. The famous critic has put the matter in a lucidity that is quite peculiar to the French national genius:

«Vous avez été chercher un plaisir dans le malheur d'autrui, et vous y avez trouvé du plaisir, voilà ce qui reste au fond du creuset. Vous êtes méchants. Taine vous dirait que vous avez

du gorille féroce. Il prétendait, vous savez, que l'homme est un descendant peu modifié du 'gorille féroce'. Le gorille lubrique, voilà pour la comédie; le gorille féroce, voilà pour le drame» (5).

This view has been echoed again and again by various writers. Prof. A. Nicoll, writing as late as 1931, speaks of the malicious pleasure in Tragedy in these words:

«Possibly there is not much of this in our pleasure at witnessing a tragedy, but unless there were an element of it we probably could not bear to see a play of misery through. . . . .Perhaps in the world of the theatre, where we know that the figures are unreal, we retain enough of the spirit of the boy who loves to see a butterfly feebly struggling on a pin, or of the savage who has not an atom of pity for his conquered enemy, to gain a secret and an unacknowledged pleasure from what are truly our most primitive emotions» (see nº 3).

All these views which we have outlined, though distinguishable, are similar at bottom. They may be put under the common category of Malevolence Theory. For to rejoice over our own safety and superiority at the very moment when our fellow-beings are suffering from the worst misfortunes, what else is it, if it is not malice? Alexander Bain, following D. Stewart, has discussed these feelings under the common heading of «the Emotion of Power», and he rightly asserts that the pleasure of Power coincides to a great extent with the pleasure of malevolence. «There is plausibility», he writes, «in Stewart's suggestion that Power is the foundation of malevolent pleasure. The facts, however, equally bear out the converse supposition — that malevolence is the basis of the delight of Power». «In fact», he says further on, «with abundance of Power, we can get the primary gratification of seeing others in pain, with or without the pretext of injury; while we can equally escape being ourselves the victims of the like wantonness» (6). Thus the sense of safety and the sense of self-superiority are all based on the malevolence in human nature.

II.

What shall we say, then, of the idea that tragic pleasure is due to malevolence? If it be accepted, then Tragedy, the highest form of art, would become a wicked amusement of a wicked humanity, and those great poets who have excelled in it, Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Racine, Schiller and others, would be nothing more than corrupters of mankind. Such a conclusion is palatable neither to the moralists nor to the lovers of Tragedy. But it would be unscientific to put a theory away with a gesture of disgust merely because it goes against our sense of human dignity. Let us examine first the main grounds on which the malevolence theory is based.

Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the Malevolence Theory is that in human nature there does linger something of primitive savage cruelty, something essentially egoistic and sadistic, by the virtue of which man exults at the defeat of an enemy, takes delight in the infliction of pain and even extracts a sinister satisfaction from the sufferings of friends. Evidences are indeed not far to seek. Children at a very early age amuse themselves by torturing insects and other inferior animals. Savage tirbes often offer human sacrifices and wear the bones of their enemies as a trophy. Civilization has done but little to suppress or refine the baser instincts. We need only recall the Roman gladiatorial shows, the Spanish auto da fés, the instruments of torture of various nations, the enthusiasm of modern mob for seeing public executions and for reading newspaper reports of murder, divorce, shipwreck, fire and other sensational accidents. Scrape the epidermis, we are all savages underneath. Nero, we are told by Juvenal, felt all the regret of Achilles at the death of Patroclus, when he had passed a night without breaking some-one's head. Let it not be said that such monsters and tyrants are exceptional among civilized peoples, for is it not reported that Spinoza used to amuse his philosophic leisure by placing flies in the web of spiders?

These accusations against human nature are eloquent enough, but they do not rerpesent the whole truth. The question whether men are born good or bad would lead to endless unprofiable debate. Instances of heroic self-sacrifices, unbounded mercy and infinite kindness are at least as numerous as those of horror and cruelty. Hobbes holds one mirror to our nature, Rousseau presents another. Perhaps the one view is just as one-sided and exaggerated as the other. The idea of natural wickedness in man is at best only a questionable hypothesis which cannot be regarded as an evidence for the Malevolence Theory.

But even if we accept such a hypothesis as valid, it does not follow that the enjoyment of tragedy belongs to the same order of experience as the delight in public execution or cock-fighting, as M. Herckenrath has upheld. We have seen in the preceding Chapter the distinction between the aesthetic attitude and the practical attitude on the one hand and that between Tragedy as a work of art and the sight of actual suffering on the other. The greatest error that the holders of Malevolence Theory have made is that they have confused these distinctions. When we enter a theatre, the threads of our daily life are clipped, as it were, with our ticket, and we live for a moment in an ideal world and look on the dramatic events mainly as some entrancing images. We do not, if we appreciate the play properly, measure ourselves with Oedipus or Hamlet, still less do we compare their fortune with our own. Actions and passions pass before us like shadows of clouds without involving the practical consequences that they usually involve in actual life. They have been «distanced» and the pleasure they give us is mainly aesthetic. They would produce quite a different feeling if they occurred in actual life. There is no necessary connection between the moral nature of a man and his delight in Tragedy. A virtuous person may follow the intrigues of Iago with curiosity, while a wicked person may weep over the innocent death of Desdemona out of aesthetic sympathy. The curiosity of the former does not prove his innate cruelty, just as the

sympathy shown by the latter does not prove his innate kindness. Both Sylla and the tyrant of Pheres, as Rousseau has pointed out in his «Lettre à D'Alembert», were notorious for their cruelty, yet they would weep in theatre at the sight of tragic events. Tourgenief has also told a story of a Moscow lady who wept over a tragic tale which she was reading in her coach, while her coachman was actually being frozen to death. Shall we argue from these instances that tragic pleasure is essentially altruistic? No, they only show that cruelty in actual life bears no necessary relation to our delight in Tragedy. There has yet been no statistical record to prove that only wicked persons take pleasure in Tragedy. On the contrary, those who go to see «Oedipus» or «Phèdre» are, so far as we know, quite respectable citizens on the whole.

M. Faguet bases his argument chiefly on the similarity between Tragedy and comedy. In criticising Saint-Marc-Giradin's view that tragic pleasure comes from «the sympathy of man for man», he complains that the other half of drama is unduly left out of considération. Now comedy, Faguet holds, appeals evidently to our innate ferocity. He would put the scandal-monger, the calumniator and the man who takes delight in comedy in the same ethical category. They are all wicked animals. M. Faguet is sure of this, for he declares that he himself is one of them. He then goes on to ask whether the other half of drama is founded on an opposite feeling, and he is quite positive in his negative answer. According to him, the difference between Tragedy and comedy is only one of degree. The same subjects are both comic and tragic: they are comic in so far as the passions represented involve no serious consequences; they become tragic when they give rise to other terrible events. If comedy is based on human malignity, there is no reason to think otherwise of Tragedy.

M. Faguet relies too much on crude common sense. His argument is defective at least in two respects. In the first place, the hypothesis that comedy satisfies our malignity is neither generally accepted, nor supported by any conclusive evidence. The

idea is indeed an old one — descended probably from Plato. It has become conspicuous through the exposition of Hobbes. But modern philosophers and psychologists still show a very wide divergence of opinions. Kant, Schopenhauer, Spencer, Bergson and Freud have certainly each as great a claim to our attention as Hobbes. The best we can do is to leave the question open. Probably, as Sully has said, comedy and laughter cannot be explained by any single theory. In basing his argument on one of the numerous hypotheses about comedy, M. Faguet is, then, treading on a debatable ground. Secondly, the idea that Tragedy and Comedy are essentially similar is perhaps even more questionable. The fact hat they are habitually called by the common name «drama» does not prove anything. An adequate discussion of the relation and difference between the two forms of dramatic art would lead us very far from our present task, suffice it to say that Tragedy differs essentially from comedy in that the latter appeals mainly to the intellect whereas the former to the emotions. As the old saying goes, the world is a comedy for those who think, and a tragedy for those who feel. The difference has been made clear by M. Bergson in his Esay on Laughter, and we ask excuse for not going into it again (7).

There is another consideration which is fatal to the Malevolence Theory. If Tragedy appeals mainly to our inborn ferocity, the intensity of its effect would be in direct proportion to the degree of its horror. The more terrible the scene it represents, the more powerful would be the feeling it arouses in the audience. This would imply the ultimate identity of the tragic with the merely terrible. But, as we shall explain more fully in Chapter V, the essence of Tragedy lies just in that it is not merely terrible. Something is needed for transforming the merely terrible to the truly tragic so that in contemplating the tragic events, we are not depressed but inspired and uplifted: The «distancing» factors which we have discussed in the preceding chapter are such transforming agents. The enjoyment of Tragedy, far from being a sinister sa-

tisfaction of the baser instincts, is rather an edifying experience. A French poet has said:

Il n'est de vulgaire chagrin
que celui d'une âme vulgaire.

The counterpart of this maxim is equally true. There is no noble joy except in a noble mind. Tragedy brings us into contact with nobility and grandeur and awakens thereby in us what is noble and grand in our own soul. It presses the trigger, as it were, of our heart, and lights up a hidden divine spark.

A proper appreciation of Tragedy requires a certain amount of taste and aesthetic culture. Every one may experience the pleasure peculiar to the sight of cock-fighting or a gladiatorial show, but few could really experience the pleasure peculiar to Tragedy. The ordinary matter-of-fact man, for want of imagination and detachment, often feels shocked by a catastrophe that is too terribe and cannot reconcile his moral sense with the unhappy ending. It is M. Herckenrath, the adherer of the Malevolence Theory, who cites the following interesting instance: «In a small village in the interior part of the Dutch Brabant, a sanglant drama was once performed. Several murders were committed one after another on the stage. After having contemplated two or three of them in silence, the good burghers could stand it no longer. They mounted the stage in crowd and put an end to the spectacle in crying: 'There is enough blood-shed!' This has been told me by an eye-witness». Such feeling is sometimes shared by eminent men of letters. Dr. Johnson, speaking of «King Lear», confesses honestly his inability to endure the terrible fate of Cordelia. «I was many years ago», he says, «so shocked by Cordelia's death that I know not whether I ever endured again to read the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor» (8). Prof. Bradley also attributes the comparative unpopularity of «King Lear» to its unduly unhappy ending (9). There is thus a limit beyond which the terrible in Tragedy ceases to give plea-

sure and may even cause pain. Such facts seem to have been ignored by those who hold the Malevolence Theory.

The majority of spectators never-enjoy an unhappy ending for its own sake. Far from it, they often wish — and sincerely too — a better fortune for the tragic hero. Almost every tragic tale in the Chinese language has some «sequent stories» in which the virtuous is rewarded and the wicked punished. Scott's «Ivanhoe», as every one knows, is also altered by posterity and the hero is made to marry Rebecca. The stage history of «King Lear» is particularly interesting in this respect. From 1681 to 1838, for a century and a half, the play was made to appear on the stage in the adapted versions of Garrick and others, in which Cordelia married Edgar and Lear was restored to his kingdom. The dictum that «truth and virtue shall at last succeed» was thus faithfully observed. Such practices, however censurable from the artistic point of view, are certainly guided by some psychological motive. There seems to be a universal longing for happy ending. Tragedy awakens a sense of regret, a feeling of pity, as well as an intense delight. Such regret and pity are often carried so far as to threaten the very existence of Tragedy itself. There is in man a natural desire to turn every tragedy into a comedy, and such a desire certainly does not spring from any innate malevolence and cruelty.

Even the delight in the sight of actual suffering, as we shall explain more fully in Chapter XI, is better accounted for by its exciting nature than by any deep-rooted malignant instinct in human nature. Children are fond of ghost stories not for the fear they excite in them but for the satisfaction of curiosity and for the pleasant feeling of a vivifying thrill. Perhaps something analogous to this may be detected in man's enthusiasm for public executions, gladiatorial shows and reports of unhappy accidents and «beaux crimes». If there is any resemblance between tragic pleasure and the delight in the sight of actual suffering, it is perhaps rather in the excitation of the feeling of vitality than in the gratification of some baser instincts. To this we shall return, however, later on.

CHAPTER IV.

TRAGIC PLEASURE AND SYMPATHY.

It is interesting to notice that in scientific discussions the same premise often leads to quite opposite conclusions. The Theory of Faguet may be well matched with that of Burke. In his «Inquiry to the Origin of our ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful», Burke objects to the idea that tragic pleasure comes from the awareness of the fictious nature of the terrible events enacted on the stage. For, he argues, we are even more attracted and fascinated by real distress and disasters. The ruin of Macedon in history touches us no less than the fall of Troy in fiction. Or to take another example from history, «Scipio and Cato are both virtuous characters, but we are more deeply affected by the violent death of the one, and the ruin of the great cause he adhered to, than with the deserved triumph and uninterrupted prosperity of the other; for terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too close, and pity is a passion accompanied with pleasure, because it arises from love and social affections».

If the delight we take in the actual misfortunes of others be thus accounted for, the pleasure we derive from the representation of tragic events cannot be otherwise. The only difference, Burke thinks, lies in that Tragedy imitates reality and yields, besides the delight usually caused by real calamities, also the pleasure resulting from the effect of artistic imitation. But Tragedy is far less powerful in arousing sympathy and less attractive to the spectators, than the actual misfortunes of our fellow-beings. Thus Burke pronounces his doctrine with his usual parliamentary eloquence:

«Choose a day on which to represent the most sublime and affecting tragedy we have, appoint the most favourite actors, spare no cost upon the scenes and decorations, unite the greatest efforts of poetry, painting and music; and when you have collected your audience, just at the moment when their minds are erect with expectation, let it be reported that a state criminal is on the point of being executed in the adjoining square; in a moment the emptiness of the theatre would demonstrate the comparative weakness of the imitative arts, and proclaim the triumph of the real sympathy» (1).

Thus both Burke and Faguet base their arguments on the same premise that we do take pleasure in the real distress and suffering of ohters; both come to the same conclusion that tragic pleasure is at bottom similar to the delight in the sight of actual calamities. But they part company when they come to the cause of tragic pleasure. Faguet, no flatterer of human nature, points triumphantly to Tragedy with a certain malice of a humorous critic: «Le gorille féroce, voilà pour la drame!» Burke, a moralist of a more philanthropic disposition, retorts on the other hand: «No, on the contrary, it is the noble spirit in man that reveals itself in Tragedy. Man takes pleasure in the sight of suffering because he sympathizes with the sufferer».

Burke's theory of sympathy finds a distant echo in the «Cours de littérature dramatique» of Saint-Marc Girardin. «La sympa-

thie que l'homme sent pour l'homme», writes the French critic, «est la cause du plaisir que donnent les arts qui procèdent de l'imitation de la nature humaine». This he holds to be especially true of drama, for at theatre we see not only the outward form of man but also the movements of his heart. Tragic pleasure results from the pity awakened in us by misfortunes. «Non pas que l'homme aime le malheur d'aurtui, mais il aime la pitié qu'il en éprouve; et comme, au théâtre, la souffrance des personnages n'a rien de réel, il jouit à son aise de son émotion» (2).

«Man likes the pity which he feels», but why? Saint-Marc Girardin does not trouble himself to elucidate his statement Burke has offered, however, a biological explanation. Men, he says, are united by the bond of sympathy, and the bond of sympathy is strengthened in proportion to the delight it gives. Pleasure is the greatest where sympathy is most needed; and sympathy is most needed where the situation is the most tragic. For if sympathy does not give pleasure but pain, we would shun every scene of misery and render no succour to the victim. Thus tragic pleasure is a biological necessity: it contributes to the well-being of the human species. Here Burke makes, however, a fine distinction. «This is not an unmixed delight», he declares, but blended with no small uneasiness. The delight we have in such things hinders us from shunning scenes of misery; and the pain we feel prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer; and all this antecedent to any reasoning, by an instinct that works us to its own purpose without our concurrence».

Burke's ingenuous paradox may be reduced to two propositions:

I. Our sympathy for the sufferer engenders the pleasure in the sight of suffering;

II. The pleasure in the sight of suffering strengthens our sympathy for the sufferer.

When we have thus put these two propositions together, their fallacy is at once obvious. Burke is arguing in a vicious circle. In

the first proposition, sympathy is the cause and pleasure the effect; in the second, the position of cause and effect is reversed. In the first proposition, he tries to seek the cause of tragic pleasure and finds it in sympathy; in the second, he tries to seek the cause of sympathy and finds it in the very tragic pleasure to which he has assigned sympathy as the cause.

A similar logical weakness may be detected in Burke's explanation of the mixed feeling in tragic experience. It may be reduced to a fallacius dilemma:

I. Pleasure in pity prevents us from shunning the scene of misery;

II. Pain in pity prompts us to relieve the sufferer from misery.

But it may be equally argued that:

I. Pleasure in pity prevents us from relieving the sufferer;

II. Pain in pity prompts us to shun the scene of misery.

We have no intention to play logical games. These remarks are simply meant to show the contradictions which Burke's argument involves.

Let us examine further the grounds on which Burke's doctrine of sympathy is based.

In the first place, that we do take pleasure in real calamities is only a partial truth. In Burke's view, the more tragical the situation, the greater is the sympathy needed, and consequently the higher is the pleasure experienced. But in point of fact, there is a limit to the pleasurability of a tragical situation. Beyond that limit, it gives pain instead of pleasure. The death of a beloved person would awaken an entirely different feeling from that of an enemy, though our sympathy is far greater in the former case. There are persons, especially women and children, who can never endure the sight of horror and misery. They often turn away from it, because of the painful feeling to which it gives rise. Others again take delight in the sight of suffering only in a small dose. This is no less true in tragedy than in real life. Dr. John-

son's inability to endure the reading of the last scenes of «King Lear» is a well-known instance.

Secondly, the contention that real calamities are far more attractive, because they need a far greater sympathy, than tragedy, is even more disputable. The desertion of a packed-up theatre for the adjoining public square where a state criminal is going to be executed, is only a supposition; and to argue from supposition never leads to anything beyond a hypothetical conclusion. It may be true of a race like the Anglo-Saxons whose political bias is particularly strong. But to say that it is true of all humanity seems to be a blasphemy to the aesthetic side of human nature. It is a well-known incident in Chinese history that the Emperor Lee Chen Shu, a great poet and an actor of no mean order, amused himself at the theatre at the very moment when the besieged capital wherein he lived was on the point of being stormed by the army of his enemy. From a moral point of view, such behaviour is nothing short of criminal, but aesthetically it may be justifiable. People in the moment of aesthetic rapture often forget themselves and the world around them and would not be led away from their pleasant reveries by any momentous event in practical life. The moment when a spectator leaves the representation of a tragedy to witness a public execution, the spell of tragedy has been broken and he merely satisfies his curiosity as an ordinary citizen who is not indifferent to state-affairs. The two kinds of experience are incommensurable, we cannot argue the weakness of the one from the strength of the other. Here it is again a question of distance. Some persons possess a greater power for «distancing» a tragical event from its connections with practical life than others, consequently there are various types of response. Perhaps in a situation, as Burke has supposed, where you have an attractive tragedy on the one hand and a public execution on the other, which side the balance will lean depends on whether the practical or the aesthetical man triumphs in you; probably some persons would remain in the theatre while others

leave their seats for the more exciting scene in the adjourning square. We do not think that the latter form the better half of humanity than the former.

Lastly, Burke's biological explanation is no more than a vague surmise. In an age when people run mad with biology, a biological solution is sought for every problem, just as in an age when people run mad with psychoanalysis, Freudianism is taken as a master-key and tried at every knock-hole. The danger is the same in both cases: to rely too much on imagination and ignore all contradictory facts. If sympathy prevents men from shunning the scene of miseries, how is it that it does not prevent them from willful inflictions of pain? The adherers of the Malvolence Theory, we remember, also seeks support from biology. Perhaps the one view is as exaggerated as the other. Man is neither a civilized gorilla nor a fallen angel pure and simple, there is perhaps something of both in him. To base our argument exclusively on an one-sided view of human nature would certainly make us miss the other half of the truth.

II.

Burke's theory of sympathy is, then, no more acceptable than Faguet's theory of Malvolence. But «sympathy» has another sense. In modern aesthetics, it is often used for sympathetic imitation in aesthetic contemplation, a phenomenon more generally called by the German word «Einfühlung».

Tragedy does arouse sympathy ,but not in the sense as Burke understands it. Burke uses the word «sympathy» in its usual moral or ethical sense. What is the difference between sympathy in its ethical sense and sympathy in its aesthetic sense? These two senses of the word «sympathy» coincide to a certain extent, but beyond that extent, they should be carefully distinguished.

Roughly speaking, sympathy is the identification of ourselves with other persons or things with the result that we participate in their feelings, emotions and sentiments. Past experiences have taught us that a certain particular situation generally arouses a certain particular feeling, emotion or sentiment; and when we find other persons or things in that particular situation, we substitute ourselves in their place, identify ourselves with them in imagination, and experience the very feeling, emotion or sentiment which they are actually experiencing or which we imagine them to experience.

So far aesthetic sympathy coincides with moral sympathy. But in spite of their agreement to this extent, they differ in three most important respects.

(1) Moral sympathy is more in consciousness than aesthetic sympathy, and consequently the identification of the subject and the object is less complete in the former case than in the latter. Moral sympathy is usually expressed in terms of subject and object, thus we say: «I sympathize with you». The subject is distinctly conscious of the difference between himself and the object with whom he sympathizes. But in aesthetic sympathy, the subject participates in the life-activities of the object without being distinctly conscious of the fact. The boundary between the ego and the non-ego (to adopt a jargon of the philosophers) is so completely wiped out that feelings, emotions and sentiments flow to and fro between the subject and the object in an inter-changing current and become fused in one harmonious stream.

(2) Moral sympathy can never be detached form the context of the total mental make-up, past experiences and present interests of the subject. Hence it is generally accompanied with hopes and fears, calculation of profit and loss, inquiry of means and ends and many other practical considérations. The subject of moral sympathy is an altruist without ceasing to be an egoist. Aesthetic sympathy, on the other hand, is a purely disinterested activity, in which, to use the words of Schopenhauer, the subject

«loses imself in the object, forgets even his individuality, his will, and only continues to exist as a pure subject» (3). The feelings, emotions and sentiments which form the content of such sympathy are detached from the context of life-history; consequently differences in life-history do not interrupt the current of sympathy, nor prevent two entirely different personalities from fusing together. «Le citoyen qui se présente à l'entrée de la Comédie», says Diderot, «y laisse tous ses vices pour ne les reprendre qu'en sortant» (4).

(3) Moral sympathy generally leads to some practical consequences. If we sympathize with a successful candidate in a parliamentary election, we shake hands with him or write articles for newspapers to support his policy. If we sympathize with the poor, we try to raise a relief fund and ameliorate their conditions. Sympathy without deed would be for a moralist an empty word in the mouth of a hypocrite. But that is almost all it means in asthetics. In aesthetic sympathy the subject is of course as active as in moral sympathy, but the nature of activity is different in the two case. In moral sympathy activity consists of practical response, it is directed *towards* the object; whereas in aesthetic sympathy, activity consists largely of what Groos has called «inner imitation», it runs parallel to the activity of the object. Sympathetic imitation leads to no practical consequences.

Now it is in the aesthetic sense, and not in the ethical or moral sense, that sympathy plays a great part in the enjoyment of Tragedy. Let us illustrate the difference by a simple instance. Let us say, we are seeing the representation of «Othello» .We may sympathize with the hero morally by trying to help him out of his misfortune, This would be an easy task, for, by dramatic irony, we know many things which Othello could not know; if he knew them, he ould never have tumbled into the pit-fall. We know, for example, that Iago is a villain and Desdemona a virtuous woman. When Iago tells Othella that Desdemona has given away her handkerchief to Cassius as a love token, we know perfectly well that

he is telling a lie and that the handkerchief is actually in his own pocket at the very moment when he talks with Othello. In actual life we may express our moral sympathy by revealing the whole truth to Othello. This moral act would of course save the innocent life of Desdemona and expose the villainy of Iago before it has done any harm. But it would also destroy the tragedy. On the other hand, we may also sympathize with Othello aesthetically, identify ourselves ideally with him, exult with him in his victory, rejoice with him in his success in love, listen with him to the slanders of Iago, feel with him the torture of jealousy and anger, and finally, crushed with disillusion and remorse, die with him «upon a kiss». We follow the unfolding of the dramatic events spontaneously without offering any resistance to the motives and tendencies of the play. We do not carry messages from Juliet to Romeo, nor tell Iphigenia her father's real intention in sending for her so as to avoid the fatal blow.

As we have said in Chapter II, the enjoyment of Tragedy requires an appropriate adjustment of distance. Moral sympathy often destroys distance and so spoils the effect of tragedy. Here is an instance given by Prof. Langfeld in his bosk on «The Aesthetic attitude»:

«A famous actor delighted to recount an incident which occurred while he was playing «The Middle-man». He was a poor inventor who had used up his last resources and could not obtain sufficient fuel to keep up the furnace fire in which the pottery was being hardened. Only a few moment more and his fortune would have been made. Moved by the excitement of the scene, a man in the gallery threw down fifty cents, shouting, 'here, Old man, buy wood with it'» (5).

A similar incident once occurred to a Chinese actor, and in his case the moral sympathy shown by the audience cost him his life. He was in the rôle of a disloyal minister, notorious for his hypocrisy and underhand dealings. He played so well that the scenes unfolded themselves in a life-like vividness. Just at the

moment when he was planning to betray the emperor, a simple wood-cutter among the audience became indignant, took his axe, mounted the stage and killed the villain at one strake!

Prof. A. Nicoll quotes the story of a good lady who loudly warned Hamlet of the poisoned rapier. Perhaps every play-goer may recall many similar instances from personal experiences. These simple people were undoubtedly good-hearted, but in showing their moral sympathy in such a naïve manner, they were no longer enjoying tragedy as a work of art.

Now we can see even more clearly than before why Burke's doctrine of sympathy is unsatisfactory. He is talking of moral sympathy. His doctrine would be true, if men like the American spectator in the gallery who thew down money for the actor in the rôle of a poor inventor to buy word, or the Chinese wood-cutter who killed a disloyal minister on the stage, constitute the infallible jury of tragedy. But alas, in the presence of their naïve sentimentality, the tragic muse never takes off her veil!

When all this is said, it would be rash however to discard moral sympathy altogether. Moral sympathy is sometimes a condition of aesthetic sympathy. There are persons who cannot sympathize with the personages of a tragedy aesthetically unless they can sympathize with them morally. An American lady comments on a modern play «The circle» and objects to the bad manners of its personages. «When I go to a play», she says, «it is as if I made a social call and I do not enjoy meeting people whom I should refuse to call upon in real life» (6). Her taste may not answer the demand of aestheticians, but a playwright would do well not to ignore the fact. The moral sense of the audience must be at least left undisturbed, otherwise the «psychical distance» would be lost and moral indignation would efface any trace of aesthetic sympathy. We shall return to this point, however, when we come to deal with the problem of justice.

III.

In the preceding section we have described aesthetic sympathy more or less in the abstract, it may not be always true of concrete experience. If our description were handed around among the audience of a full-packed theatre at the presentation of a tragedy, what would they say about it? Probably only a small portion of them would agree to it entirely; others would say that in their case aesthetic sympathy is awakened only at certain critical moments of the play; others again would confess that they never identify themselves with the characters at all. The problem is complicated by the nature of the dramatic art, by the novelty or familiarity of the play to the audience, and lastly by the individual differences of spectators.

Dramatic art, in spite of its employment of actual human beings as medium and its lifelike vividness, has a certain disadvantage for securing aesthetic sympathy. A single character does not make up a drama, dramatic action takes place when a number of persons are placed together and involved in various relations. The question arise: with which of them does the spectator identify himself in aesthetic sympathy? There are some people who identify themselves with the hero or the heroine, and respond to other personages just as the hero or the heroine responds to them. For example, in «Hamlet» they would identify themselves principally with Hamlet. With Hamlet they mourn the death of the Old King, complain of the hasty marriage of Gertrude, feel friendly towards Horatio, despise Polonius ,love and suspect Ophelia and fight the duel with Laertes. Perhaps it is for facilitating the initiation of aesthetic sympathy that Tragedy has a hero or a heroine at all; and it is for the same reason that writers on Poetics lay so much stress on the unity of action or interest. In actual life events are interwoven in a thousand subtle ways, they do not generally centre around some one person, still less do they show any unity of interest. Tragedy cuts off all the entangled

threads and insulates, so to speak, both the personages and the actions. It is this concentration of interest that makes the identification of the spectaor with the principal charecter possible.

But in spite of this concentration, the presence of several personages sometimes distracts attention. It either destroys identification altogether, or leads the spectator to assume one personality after another in such a quick succession that he is no longer able to enjoy tragedy as a work of art. Müller Freienfels quotes a case which illustrates such shifting of personalities:

«I forget entirely that I am at theatre. I have forgetten my personal existence. I feel only the emotions of the personages in the play. Now I rave with Othello, then I tremble with Desdemona. Sometimes I would also intervene and save them. I pass so quickly from one state of mind to another that I can no longer control myself, especially in modern dramas. Thus at «King Lear», I became conscious at the end that, being frightened, I hung on the arms of a freind» (7). Miss Downey cites a similar case in which a reader «lives a great number of different lives, laughs and cries with the characters» (8). Sometimes the playwrights and novelists themselves lose their own personality and become the personages whom they describe. Speaking of his experience in writing «Madame Bovary», Flaubert writes to a friend:

«C'est une délicieuse chose que d'écrire, que de ne plus être soi, mais de circuler dans toute la création dont on parle. Aujourd'hui, par exemple, homme et femme tout ensemble, amant et maîtresse à la fois, je me suis promené à cheval dans une forêt par une après-midi d'automne sous des feuilles jaunes» (9).

It is doubtful whether in the case of spectators, such identification with all the characters is compatible with the proper appreciation of tragedy, for in identifying oneself with one character after another, one is so absorbed in actually living through the dramatic emotions that one cannot see the artistic side of the play, its vue d'ensemble, its contrast, its proportion, its rhythm, its harmony, in a word, its beauty.

Secondly ,the novelty or familiarity of a tragedy also affects the intensity of aesthetic sympathy. If the spectator does not know a play before-hand and comes to see it for the first time, the scenes are naturally more exciting, his attention more readily riveted on the image; consequently aesthetic sympathy is more likely to occur. But as emotion fades away with familiarity, a person who has seen or read for a hundred times the tragedy of «Hamlet» cannot be expected to identify himself with the hero and participate his passions in their original intensity every time he sees or reads it. Nevertheles he still enjoys it, and even appreciates it the better, the more familiar he becomes with it. It may be said that with the increase of familiarity, the course of dramatic events gradually lose the pungency of actual experiences and become more and more ideal. Matter sinks down and form emerges. Emotional excitement gives place to intellectual contemplation. The spectator, instead of being «carried away» by dramatic passions and losing his self-possession, begins to enjoy the play as a work of art in a God-like detachment. It is only at this stage that he can be said to see the beauty of it. This fact is worth noticing, for it enables us to see why modern German aesthetics wich makes «Empathy» or «identification» almost coextensive with aesthetic experience is one-sided and abstract. It enables us to see also why the Romantic ideal of art, which raises passion to Heaven, is after all infantile and superficial, compared with the classical ideal for which beauty is always calm, serene and plastic.

Lastly, people do not always respond to an aesthetic object like tragedy in the same clear-cut fashion, there are all shades of individual differences. Broadly speaking, people may be grouped in two psychological types with infinite intermediate varieties. The subjective type on the one extreme and the objective on the other. The difference is the same as what Nietzsche means by the Dionysian and the Apollonian, Jung by the introvert and the extrovert, and Müller Freienfels by the «participant» (Mitspieler) and the «contemplator» (Zuschauer). What has been said above about

aesthetic sympathy is mainly true of the «participant» type. People of the «contemplator» type on the other hand retain their own personality amidst violent passions. They look on the movements of events and emotions as pictures. They understand what is passing on the stage, they enjoy it, but they do not forget themselves or participate in the life-activities of the dramatis personae in a vivid illusion. Here is an instance of such a type given by Müller Freienfels:

«I sit before the scene just as before a picture. All the while I know that it is not reality. I never forget for a moment that I am sitting in the orchestra-stall. Of course I feel the emotions or passions of the personages, but this only furnishes the material for my own aesthetic sentiment. I do no feel the represented emotions, I feel beyond them. My judgment remains alert and clear. I am always conscious of my emotions. I am never carried away; or if this happens, I feel it disagreable. Art begins when we forget the 'what' and only take interest in the 'how'» (1).

Obviously with spectators of this type, the intellectual element predominates and aesthetic sympathy occurs only in a slight degree. The two types thus described as the participant and the contemplator represent of course the extremes. Neither of them can be said to be capable of ideal aesthetic experience. Complete participation, as we have said, prevents the spectator from seeing the beauty of a tragedy in its proper perspective. Detached contemplation, on the other hand, borders on the purely critical attitude and often fails to lead to any emotional experience. An ideal aesthetic experience requires both participation and contemplation. It is through participation that we can understand the emotions represented in a work of art; it is through contemplation that we can see whether such emotions are beautifully represented. A great Chinese philosopher, Laotze, has a saying to the effect: «see the secret of things by possessing emotions and desires ;but see the beauty of things by annihilating emotions and desires». An ideal spectator possesses both these requisites: he participates in the

life of the aesthetic object without losing enirely the consciousness of the ego.

IV.

So far we have confined our attention to the spectator. When we turn to the actor and actress, the same distinction between the participant and the contemplator may be discerned. Some players leave their own personality in the green-room and become both dramatically and psychologically the characters whom they personify. They abandon themselves to the dramatic situation, experience the emotions and passions of the personages not as simulated but as actually lived through. They move on the stage just as if they were moving in the real world. Gsell writes of Gémier: «He identifies himself with his heroes to such an extent that, even after the fall of the curtain, he still remains in their sphere. It is only after a few moments that he recovers himself, resumes his ordinary voice and gestures, and sets foot again in the common existence» (11). Sarah Bernhardt writes also: «En général, on peut jeter à bas les ennuis, les soucis de la vie, et pour quelques heures on dépouille sa propre personnalité, pour en endosser une autre; et l'on marche dans le rêve d'une autre vie, oubliant tout». She tells of her own experience in playing «Phédre» at London: «Je souffrais, je pleurais, j'implorais, je criais; et tout cela était vrai; ma souffrance était horrible; mes larmes coulaient brûlantes et âcres» (12). La Malibran is another typical example. She seldom studied her rôles, relying mainly on the inspriation of the moment. She used to tell her partners in Othello: «Sieze me where-ever you can at the last scene, for at that moment, I cannot control my own movements» (13). Generally an actor begins with a clear head, but as action is approaching its climax, he becomes gradually possessed by dramatic emotions and loses his self-control. Such is the experience of Antoine in playing the «Ghosts» of Ibsen: «A partir du second acte, je ne me sou-

viens de rien, ni du public, ni de l'effet du spectacle, et, le rideau tombé, je me suis retrouvé grelottant, énervé et incapable de me ressaisir pendant un bout de temps» (14).

These artists, we may well imagine, answer to the description of aesthetic sympathy or identification as given in the preceding section. But others however belong to the «contemplator» type. They study their rôles before a glass, every change of gestures and facial expressions and every fluctuation of accent and intonation are carefully fixed before-hand so as to form an image before the mind's eye. When they appear on the stage they do nothing but copy the image from memory. While they simulate the emotions of the characters with a vividness that creates a deep illusion among the audience, they know what they are doing all the while. This is the usual practice of great Chinese actors. Once the rôle has been created by a great master, it becomes a tradition to be handed down from generation to generation, from the interpretation of the text to the minute details such as the manner of stroking the moustache or the length and pitch one takes to pronounce a certain word. Among great European actors, David Garrick is a classical example of this type. We are told by his biographer that at the rehearsal of «Richard» he bade the actress Siddons who was in the rôle of Lady Anne, to follow him step by step as he drew Lady Anne from the sofa, so that he might keep his face to the audience, as he acted much with his eyes. During the performance, he simulated the passion of Richard so well, that the fearful expression of his face frightened his female partner, yet amid this show of violent passion, he noticed that Siddons had forgotten her instructions and reminded her with a look of reproof (15). There is no better evidence than this of the actor's presence of mind. Diderot has told an amusing story about Caillot which also illustrates the detachment of great actors: «Caillot avait joué le Deserteur, il était encore sur le lieu où il venait d'éprouver et elle de partager, à côté de lui, toutes les transes d'un malheureux prêt à perdre sa maîtresse et la vie. Caillot s'ap-

proche de la loge de la princesse Galitzin et lui adresse, avec ce visage riant que vous connaissez, des propos gais, honnêtes et polis. La princesse, étonnée, lui dit: «Comment! Vous n'êtes pas mort? Moi qui n'ai été que spectatrice de vos angoisses, je n'en suis pas encore revenue.» — Non, Madame, je ne suis pas mort. Je serais trop à plaindre si je mourrais si souvent. — Vous ne sentez donc rien? — Pardonnez-moi....» (16). Here we have a spectator of the «participant »type and an actor of the «contemplator» type.

The famous parodox of Diderot has caused much dispute. According to him, an ideal actor should be free from all sensibility, watch himself and listen to his own voice during the performance. «Moi, je lui veux beaucoup de jugement. Il me faut dans cet homme un spectateur froid et tranquille. J'en exige, par conséquent, de la pénétration et nulle sensibilité». He supports his view with the practice of La Clairon. «Lorsqu'elle s'est une fois élevée à la hauteur de son fantôme, elle se possède, elle se répète sans émotions». This doctrine of insensibility is particularly instructive as it came from a man who, by his own confessions, was often a victim of sensibility.

Some great actors have, however, called Diderot's paradox in question. Theodore Komisarjevsky, formerly producer and art director of the Moscow State and Imperial Theatre, holds an entirely different view. «It is proved now», he writes, «that an actor cannot move the audience, or be in any way creative on the stage, if he watches himself acting. Instead of being concentrated on the images he has to create, on his inner self, he becomes concentrated on his outer self, becomes self-conscious and loses the power of imagination. The better way is to act only with the help of imagination; to create, and not to imitate or reproduce one's own life-experiences. When the actor playing a part is living in a world of images created by his own phantasy, he cannot and need not watch and control himself. The images created by the

actor's phantasy, and obedient to his call, control, guide and direct his emotions and actions during the performance» (17).

In our opinion, Diderot and Komisarjevsky have gone to two opposite extremes, the truth seems to lie in the middle way. What we have said about the spectator holds good of the actor. On the one hand, an actor should not participate dramatic emotions to such an extent as to lose his self-control. The creative process of art, including that of acting, requires a sober intelligence and clear judgment to attain measure and harmony. An artist must be a critic of his own work, and self-criticism implies self-consciousness. Komisarjevsky speaks of «creating a world of images», but how could one do this without projecting emotions and looking at them as a picture at an appropriate distance? On the other hand, art is not mere repetition. Every act of creation requires a fresh impetus and reflects a new state of mind, otherwise it would lack life and vigour and become stagnant. The traditional Chinese acting, which answers very well Diderot's ideal, is often too formalistic and incapable of calling forth any emotional response at all. Diderot exaggerates an undeniable truth when he says that the actor «copies» himself at every performance once the rôle has been studied and fixed.

An ideal actor ought to feel the dramatic emotions without living through them as in actual experience, to have the air of abandoning himself to the situation without losing his self-control. In a word, identification with the character should go hand in hand with a clear judgment. On the whole, Diderot's paradox comes nearer to the truth than its opposite theory that «an actor cannot and need not watch and control himself». Judging from the advice given by Hamlet to the players, we may well imagine that Shakespeare steers such a middle course as we have advocated here. He seems to dislike particularly the «participant» type of actors :

«Nor do not saw the air too much with your-hand, thus, but use all gently : for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say,

the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod, pray you, avoid it» (18).

The practice of some great modern actors also lends support to our view. As Eugène Delacroix has recorded in his «Journal», both Garcia and Talma insisted on the combined effects of self control and momentary inspiration. «Il disait être en scène parfaitement le maître de diriger son insipration et de se juger, tout en ayant l'air de se livrer; mais il ajoutait que si, dans ce moment, on était venu lui annoncer que sa maison était en feu, il n'eût pu s'arracher à la situation» (19).

V.

We may now sum up what has been said in the present Chapter. The Malevolence Theory has led us to examine its opposite view held by Burke, that tragic pleasure results from sympathy. We have found that Burke's doctrine is logically fallacious and that it confuses tragic pleasure with delight in the sight of actual suffering. This brings us to a detailed examination of the difference of two kinds of sympathy, moral and aesthetic. We have found it to lie in the degree of consciousness, in their relation to practical interests and lastly in the nature of the activity which they involve. It is aesthetic sympathy and not moral sympathy, that we often experience in the enjoyment of Tragedy. Moral sympathy is often detrimental to such an enjoyment, as it goes against the motives and tendencies of the play. Then we go on to examine how far aesthetic sympathy plays a rôle in the contemplation of Tragedy, we have found that it is not always present. The problem is complicated by several factors. First, the presence of se-

veral characters in a tragedy often makes identification either impossible or incompatible with aesthetic judgment. Secondly, familiarity with a piece often leads to the subordination of emotional excitement to a detached intellectual contemplation. Lastly, there are different types of spectators and those who belong to the purely «contemplator» type generally do not experience any intense aesthetic sympathy. The same difference between the «participant »and the «contemplator» type of spectators holds good in the case of actors and actresses. The famous paradox of Diderot that an actor, while simulating the dramatic emotions in a life-like manner, should not experience them as actual emotions is mainly true, though exaggerated. Good acting, as well as proper appreciation, requires both sensibility and judgment, both participation and detached contemplation. We have seen that this view is supported by Shakespeare and some great modern actors.

To return to the problem of tragic pleasure; though aesthetic sympathy may contribute much to our delight in Tragedy, it cannot be the sole or even the main factor in it. The purely «contemplator» type of spectators seldom experience aesthetic sympathy, they can none-the-less enjoy a tragedy in their own way.

CHAPTER V.

PITY AND FEAR: TRAGEDY AND THE SENSE OF THE SUBLIME.

I.

The theory of tragic pleasure as an effect of sympathy may be regarded as a descendant from the ancient doctrine that Tragedy excites pity, for pity is nothing but sympathy in pain, a subspecies of sympathy which is awakened especially by tragic situations. The discussion of sympathy thus brings us by natural sequence to the problem of pity and fear in Tragedy raised by Aristotle in his «Poetics». Aristotle treats the problem in connection with his famous theory of Catharsis. Here we shall for the sake of convenience discuss pity and fear apart from Catharsis, which will be dealt with in a separate Chapter.

The feeling of pity, extolled as a great virtue by both Buddhism and Christianity, has ever been the target of the «tough-minded» philosophers. For them pity is a vice rather than a virtue, a defect of the soul from which reason should set us free. The attack was first launched by Plato who looked askance at Tragedy

for the very reason that it excites pity, an unworthy passion which should be suppressed rather than fostered. The tragic poets are censurable, because they exploit by the lure of pleasure a baser part of human nature at the expense of reason. «The natural hunger for weeping and lamentation», says Socrates to Glaucon, «which we keep under control in our own hours of unhappiness, is just what your poets gratify and indulge». When the spectator listens to a hero lamenting his sufferings, he sympathizes with him and praises the poet. He reckons the pleasure he thus receives as a gain, ignoring, however, that he who begins by weeping at the misfortunes of others will end by weeping at his own. This would be unmanly, not to say that it hampers the council of reason which is so much needed for relieving those misfortunes. Tragedy in exciting pity exercises a demoralising influence on the spectators. So Plato with his characterestic irony banishes the tragic poets from his ideal state after having delivered them a polite apology (1).

Ity is against such an overstrained puritanism of Plato that Aristotle directs his missiles in his «Poetics». «Through pity and fear», he pleads for Tragedy, «it effects the proper catharsis of these emotions» (2). The problem of pity and fear which he has raised here has a long history which does not seem to show the European intellect in its best light. The two little words «pity and fear» have become a tilting-ground of learning on which many eminent scholars have made a trial of their skill and ingenuity. The confusion remain as great as ever. Some regard pity and fear as independent emotions either of which, taken alone, is sufficient to produce the tragic effect (Corneille); others see an essential connection between them and regard fear as an ingradient of pity (Lessing), so that Tragedy in exciting pity, excites fear as well. Some believe that pity is felt for the tragic hero, and fear for ourselves (Lessing), others think that are both felt for the tragic hero without any egoistic reference (Bywater). Some regard pity as the more important of the two (Schopenhauer, Bywater), others

think that tragic heroes are above our pity and fear alone is excited by Tragedy (A. Nicoll). Some identify the pity and fear of Tragedy with those of real life (Corneille, Lessing), others hold that they are essentially different (Bywater, Butcher). Numerous other points are equally in dispute (3).

Any further discussion on the subject would seem to aggravate the confused situation. A word of apology is perhaps needed for renewing the old controversy. Most of the previous writers wanted to settle on philological grounds a problem which can never be satisfactorily settled on philological grounds alone. The problem of pity and fear in Tragedy is more a question of psychology and aesthetics than a question of Greek-scholarship. The attention of previous writers has been concentrated on the question whether Aristotle meant this or that, but the real problem is whether this or that interpretation is true of our actual experience. It is this problem which we propose to study in the present Chapter.

II.

It has been generally acknowledged that Aristotle's definition of Tragedy is a rejoinder to Plato's accusation of the tragic poets in the tenth book of «The Republic». It is noteworthy, however, that in Plato's attack, pity alone is emphasized (4), why, then, should Aistotle introduce fear in addition to pity in his defense of Tragedy? The question seems unimportant at first sight, so it has escaped the attention of previous writers. But, as we shall show later on, it is really essential to know why fear should be added to pity in order to produce the tragic effect.

Let us analyse the emotion of pity first, and see whether it is sufficient by itself to produce the tragic effect.

Lessing and some other German writers have rendered the Greek word «ΕΛΕΟΣ» wich definitely means «pity» with the German word «Mitleiden» which may mean either «pity» in particular or «sympathy» in general. Now pity cannot be identified with

sympathy in its widest sense. Sympathy is the sharing of another's feelings, emotions or sentiments in general, whether they are pleasant or painful; pity is the sharing of only those feelings, emotions or sentiments of another which are particularly painful. When we laugh with our boon companions or shake hands with a successful candidate, it is to do violence to language to use the word «pity» on such occasions.

Again, pity is awakened by the painful feelings, emotions or sentiments of another, it should not be identified with these feelings, emotions or sentiments themselves as ideally participated, when we pity a person in fear, for example, it is true that we share that fear with him in imagination, but over and above it, there must be some one or several elements which constitute the emotion of pity. Pity is in no way coextensive with the fear felt in an imaginary situation. In the same way, we pity others in anger, jealousy, hatred, envy, remorse etc., we share these emotions with them to a certain extent, but in all these cases there must be some mental factors which constitute pity and which are always present amid varying circumstances. Lessing is wrong, therefore to think that Aristotle «understood by the word 'pity' all the emotions in which we participate with another».

What are, then, the specific elements which constitute the emotion of pity? There is first of all in pity an element of love or sympathy which the subject has for the object of pity. We do not pity those whom we hate. The subject may be conscious or unconscious of his love or sympathy for the object, but it is always present in varying degrees of intensity as a potential driving force. The feeling tone of this element of pity is always pleasant. Secondly pity contains also as its essential element a sense of regret. The feeling-tone of this element of pity is always pleasant. Sedeformity. It is fragile, delicate and helpless. We feel somehow that there is something wrong with it and consciously or unconsciously wish it to be otherwise. The feeling-tone of this element of pity is mixed. It is predominently painful. But as the pitiable

object is in some respect inferior to us, there is often a slight element of pleasure that usually accompanies the sense of safety and self-superiority. These two elements — love and sense of regret — are always present in pity whether the emotion sympathetically participated is fear, anger, hatred, remorse or something else.

It may be noticed that in our analysis of pity we have not included fear as one of its essential elements. But this is not the view held by Lessing. What we pity for others, he thinks, we fear for ourselves. «The feeling of pity is impossible without fear for ourselves, ...fear is a necessary ingredient of pity». One of his followers, Döring, even goes so far as to regard pity as «a disguised fear» (5). In our opinion, such a view shows a lack of psychological insight.

In actual life, pity may be accompanied sometimes with fear as in the case of a mother nursing her only child who suffers from a serious disease and is expected to die at any moment. We pity her and share her fear, but that fear is rather a sympathetic anxiety felt for the life of the sick child than any actual fear felt for ourselves at the thought of falling in a similar misfortune. We may pity others though we are perfectly aware that there is no possibility of ourselves being visited by a fate similar to theirs. An orphan is in a better position than any-body else to pity another child who has been bereft of parents, because his own sad experience has taught him to understand fully the pitiable situation. Shall we say that his pity necessarily contains fear for himself lest he himself should lose his parents? Lessing bases his argument on two passages in Aristotle's «Rhetoric». In one place Aristotle says: «All things we fear for ourselves, we pity when they happen to others» .Elsewhere he says: «Generally a man pities when he is in a position to remember that like things have befallen himself or his friends, or to expect that they may». But these passages really do not warrant Lessing's conclusion that pity necessarily contains fear for ourselves, for they simply mean that in pity

we interpret other's feeling by the help of our own experience, as in the case of an orphan pitying another orphan, or a blindman pitying another blind-man.

True pity never contains fear. On this point nothing more eloquent has been said than the following passages from M. Bergson:

«Peut-être la crainte entre-t-elle en effet pour quelque chose encore dans la compassion que les maux d'autrui nous inspirent; mais ce ne sont toujours là que des formes inférieures de la pitié. La pitié vraie consiste moins à craindre la souffrance qu'à la désirer. Désir léger qu'on souhaiterait à peine de voir réalisé, et qu'on forme pourtant malgré soi comme si la nature commettait quelque grande injustice, et qu'il fallût écarter tout soupçon de complicité avec elle. L'essence de la pitié est donc un besoin de s'humilier, une aspiration à descendre» (6).

To this we may add that the impulses of pity and fear are essentially different and even antagonistic. Pity as an expression of love or sympathy is generally accompanied with the impulse of approach. Fear, on the other hand, results from a sense of danger and is generally accompanied with the impulse of retreat or flight. Thus to regard pity as a disguised fear is to ignore their fundamental nature.

So far we have only discussed the nature of pity in general. We may now pass to the examination of the rôle of pity in the enjoyment of Tragedy. Some writers think that Tragedy does not arouse pity at all. Prof. A. Nicoll, for example, writes in his «Theory of Drama»:

«We may hardly express pity for what we feel is loftier and nobler than ourselves. We can pity a man or an animal, but we cannot pity a god. There is no call for 'sympathetic tears' on behalf of Premetheus or Orestes, precisely because in the grandeur of their being they are greater than we are. We do not sympathize with Othello to the extent of feeling pity, because Othello is a force beyond our ken, primitive perhaps, but strong and majestic.

We do not weep at the death of Cordelia, because she has a hardness in her nature which forbids our tears» (7).

Prof. A. Nicoll may speak from his own personal experience, but we wonder whether his view be accepted by the majority of theatre-goers. It certainly sounds odd to us that one does not feel pity at the death of Cordelia or at the suffering of Prometheus. Shakespeare seems to hold a different opinion when he makes Lear say:

> A sight most pitiable in the meanest wretch,
> Past speaking in a king.

Pity in Tragedy is not, of course, merely a matter of «sympathetic tears», or something sentimental and womanish. It may be described as a kind of «cosmic emotion» awakened by a sudden visualization of the power of Fate and the futility of life. The error of Prof. A. Nicoll is, we think, similar to that of Lessing, that is to regard pity in Tragedy as a kind of moral sympathy directed to some distinctly external object. Now the enjoyment of Tragedy, as we have shown in Chapter II, is an aesthetic emotion, and tragic pity is consequently an aesthetic sympathy. It is in the essential nature of aesthetic sympathy that the distincion beween the subject and the object is obliterated in consciousness. So tragic pity is not directed to the tragic hero as a distinctly external object, but to the tragic hero as sympathetically identified with the spectator himself. It is more or less allied to self-pity; it is the kind of pity which one sometimes feels for oneself, when one is confronted with an irretrievable fate as that which makes Othello cry:

> Nay, that's certin, but yet the pity of it, Igo!
> O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

When Iago induces him to believe that his wife is unfaithful. Perhaps «self-pity» is not exactly the right word to be used here. When a man is crushed by a great calamity, he is no longer self-centered, he tends to reflect on human suffering in general, he thinks that his own misfortune is somehow a particular instance

of universal woe, he feels that mankind as a whole is doomed to eternal misery and he himself in only another drop of water fallen to the vast ocean of sorrow and pain. There seems to be something wrong with the moral order of the universe, and his natural desire for perfection and happiness makes him regret it. It is this sense of regret which predominates in the tragic emotion of pity. Call it «pity» or «pessimism» or whatever you like, it is certainly present in most great tragedies. If we do not feel something like this, we have certainly missed an essential part of the tragic spirit. Does not the suffering of Prometheus or the death of Cordelia make us feel regretful? Does not that regret amount to something like pity? The question whether these personages are above our pity does not come in here; for in the white heat of emotional glow, we never for a moment compare ourselves with Prometheus or Cordelia, their woe has become our woe, and we join force with them, so to speak, to face a common foe, wich is Evil or the disturbing element in the moral order of the universe.

Pity cannot be dispensed with, then, in the contemplation of Tragedy. But Corneille is equally wrong in supposing that pity is sufficient by itself to produce the tragic effect. Pity as a kind of aesthetic sympathy, when it is taken alone, is more allied to the sense of the graceful than to the sense of the tragic. The sense of the graceful has not been sufficiently studied by aestheticians There may be some truth in Spencer's theory that it results from an «economy of force». A dancer is most graceful when she shows least sign of effort in her skillful movement. But such a view, plausible as it is, leaves the emotional effect of the graceful unexplained. The graceful object is generally small, fragile and submissive, it has always something feminine in it. It offers us no resistance and seems to express to us joy and love. It sollicits our sympathy. In our response to the graceful object, we seem to assume a patronizing, or at least a friendly, attitude. Our emotion is mingled with a kind of pity. We regret somehow that such a

lovable object should be so slender, so fragile and so tame-spirited. This feeling has been well analysed by M. Guyau:

«Une attitude légèrement courbée, surtout la flexion du cou, le laisser-aller des bras, indique de plus la mélancolie et la tristesse, qui semble faire appel à la pitié d'autrui; elle excitera donc un sentiment voisin de la pitié qui se retrouve dans notre faible pour le seule — pleurer. Enfin, la grâce est toujours de l'abandon; or on ne s'abandonne pleinement que quand on aime; nous pouvons donc dire avec Schelling que la grâce est avant tout l'expression de l'amour, et c'est pour cela qu'elle l'excite; la grâce semble aimer et c'est pour cela qu'on l'aime» (8).

The sense of the graceful is thus closely related to pity. Guyau has well emphasized the element of love in it; but he has not, perhaps, done enough justice to the sense of regret. Many things are lovable, but only those which are in some way defective can arouse the true pity. The graceful has of course different shades, ranging from the expression of pure joy as in the smile of innocent children or in the bedewed flower stretching itself towards the morning sun, to the expression of deep melancholy as in the quivering of aspen or in the head of Christ in «The Last Supper» of Leonardo da Vinci. The sense of regret becomes more and more prominent as the graceful approaches the latter extreme.

The graceful comes perhaps nearest to the tragic when it is tinctured with sadness. Great masterpieces of tragedy generally posses a kind of beauty which may be described as «sad grace». «Oedipus at Colonus», «Iphigenia at Aulis», «Bérénice», the Gretchen episode in «Faust» are obvious instances. Space forbids us to quote Hamlet's great prose monologue on «what a piece of work is a man», the pessimistic note in that noble passage illustrates very well what we mean by «sad grace» in Tragedy. But let us take a shorter passage, Hamlet's dying words addressed to Horatio:

> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
> Absent thee from felicity awhile

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.

There is nothing here which might be described as mere pathos or sentimentalism. But do we not find here besides the unmistakable heroic note a deep sense of regret? Do we not feel after listening to such a sad and yet inspiring appeal a kind of feeling which we sometimes feel at contemplating an autumnal sun-set? Or take another example. Othello, whom Prof. A. Nicoll regards as a strong and majestic force above our pity, addresses the Venetian ambassadors before he stabs himself:

Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum.

What other emotion does Shakespeare mean to arouse in us, if it is not pity? The sense of regret is predominent in the bosom of Othello and in our sympathetic response, we too feel that regret and wish consciously or unconsciously that things should have happened otherwise. Such a feeling is similar to what we feel at the sight of a graceful object tinctured with melancholy and sadness. In this particular case the effect is heightened by the richness of language.

But mere «sad grace» does not by itself produce the tragic effect. European literature at the Romantic period is permeated all through with Byronic sentimentalism and melancholy, it makes its strongest appeal to pity. But in spite of its power in arousing «sympathetic tears» in youths and maidens, it lacks the essential thing of tragic poetry, it seldom uplifts and inspires us. Read first

a moving stanza in Byron's «Childe Harold», Keat's «Ode to Nightingale», Lamartine's «Lac» or Musset's «Nuit de Mai», and then read the parting scene of Hector and Andromaque in Homer, the «Oedipus at Colonus» or the great monologues of Hamlet or Macebeth; let us compare our impressions of these different kinds of poetry, we shall see at once the difference between the graceful tinctured with sadness and the truly tragic.

In what lies the difference then? The examples given above seem to point to the conclusion that the heroic element is present in the one case but absent in the other. Tragedy possesses as one of its essential elements a heroic grandeur which awakens in us a sense of wonder and admiration. We admire the force and energy of the tragic hero while we regret for his misfortune. This is undoubtedly true. But the heroic, again, is insufficient by itself to produce the tragic effect. The Mediaeval Romances of King Arthur, Roland and other great heroic figures do not produce the same impressions as great tragedies. Very often the tragic element in them is overpowered by the merely heroic. Even tragedies may stop short at the merely heroic and fail to rise to the level of the truly tragic. Corneille's «Cid» and Victor Hugo's «Hernani» are typical examples. To illustrate the difference between the tragic and the merely heroic, let us compare «Le Cid» with «Romeo and Juliet». Both are the earlier works of their authors. They resemble each other in the circumstances in which the hero and the heroine find temselves. The family hatred between the Montagues and the Capulets is not unlike the quarrel between Don Diègue and Don Gormas; Romeo is a Rodrigue without his cult of family honour, Juliet is a Chimène unsophisticated as to the sense of duty. The King of Castille has to look after the peace and order of his realm just as the Prince of Verona. Even Don Sanche finds his counterpart in count Paris. Suppose that Romeo has assuaged the family hatred by killing Capulet instead of Tybald, Juliet cries for justice at the court of Verona and seeks revenge with the help of Count Paris, and finally Romeo wins a great Victory, saves his country,

obtains pardon from both the Prince and Juliet, and crowns his fortune with a happy marriage; and you have «Le Cid» in its essence, its «pompe» and «grands desseins», its sense of duty and honour, in a word, its heroic grandeur. But where is the pity and terror of the «Romeo and Juliet» of Shakespeare? Where is the deep sense of fate, the inconquerable power of love, the mingling of «The collars of the moonshine's watery beams» with «the yoke of inauspicious stars»? «Le cid» ends with a compromise, it is a happy ending. It is not that the mere presence or absence of an unhappy ending could make or mar a great Tragedy. The Orestian Trilogy ends happily like «Le Cid». But other things being equal, an unhappy ending does heighten the sense of the tragic. The greatest defect of «Le Cid» as a tragedy is that the total impression which it produces is, unlike both the Orestian Trilogy and «Romeo and Juliet», far from being tragic. The element of terror does not stand out in sufficient relief. The happy ending in the Orestian Trilogy is like a narrow beam of sunshine piercing through the clouded sky after a great storm, whereas that in «Le Cid» is like the sunshine which is all the more lovely as it comes after a shower.

To contemplate a great tragedy is like watching a great storm. We feel first a thrill of fear before some overwhelming power; then we are somehow uplifted by that fear-inspiring power to a level of vitality which we seldom reach in actual life. In a word, the tragic uplifts us after it has overwhelmed or threatened us. In the tragic experience a rush of self-expansion follows a sense of humiliation, a feeling of wonder and admiration follows a thrill of fear. The heroic simply uplifts us without producing first a thrill of fear.

Fear is thus an indispensable element in the sense of the tragic. But such fear should not be confounded with the fear in actual life. If the tragic is not the merely heroic, nor is it the merely terrible. The merely terrible does not inspire us, on the contrary,

it leaves us gloomy and depressed. As Mr. Livingstone has well observed:

«Many moderns can faithfully describe what is disagreable, but their effects are often brutal and always depressing. The gift of portraying suffering and evil with unflinching faith, yet of conveying other feelings than those of mere horror, is reserved for few. Its rarity explains the rarity of great tragedy, of which it seems to be a condition that it shall truthfully show what is darkest in life, without leaving a final and dominent sense of gloom. The Greek writers possessed this secret» (8.)

To illustrate Mr. Lingstone's remark, let us compare Abbé Prévost's «Manon Lescaut» with «Romeo and Juliet», Balzac's «Père Goriot» with «King Lear», Dostoïffsky's «Crime and Punishment» with «Hamlet» or Remarque's «All's quiet on the Western Front» with «Macbeth». The novels mentioned here are among the greatest of their kind, and in materials they bear some resemblance to the masterpieces of tragedy with which they are grouped together. But they fail to produce the uplifting effect which great tragedies generally produce. Few of us feel edified after reading them. The difference is due, first of all to the fact that miseries and horrors are described in them in all their sordidness without being «distanced» by the magnificence of poetic language, and secondly to the fact that their principal characters often lack the nobility and grandeur of tragic heroes and heroines. Mere terror does not produce the sense of the tragic, just as a shipwreck or an earthquake does not make its victims tragic heroes and the reports of crimes and misfortunes in newspapers, however vivid they may be, do not make tragedies. In spite of the frequent occurence of the word «tragedy» in everyday conversation, there is no tragedy in real life. The merely terribe is in its effect just opposite to the heroic, each possesses what the other lacks. The heroic inspires us without first thrilling us with an emotion of fear, whereas the merely terrible thrills us with fear without inspiring us. The tragic must produce both effects at once.

III.

Let us now summarize our result. Starting from the problem whether pity alone is sufficient to produce the tragic effect, we have shown that pity as an aesthetic sympathy is more allied to the graceful than to the tragic. Setting out, then, to seek the difference between the tragic and the graceful tinctured with sadness, we have found that it lies neither in the heroic nor in the terrible. But on our way we have seen that the tragic differs from the heroic in that it awakens fear, and from the terrible in that it elevates the soul of the spectator after having overwhelmed it with fear.

Those who are familiar with «The Critique of Judgment» will see at once that our account of the tragic effect resembles in its essential features to the Kantian doctrine of the sublime. For in speaking of «a rush of self-expansion after a thrill of fear before some overwhelming power», we have defined in a rough way not only the sense of the tragic, but also that of the sublime. Leaving the difference between the tragic and the sublime for the moment, we examine first their similarities.

The sublime, as Prof. Bradley has pointed out in his admirable essay, has two equally necessary stages, — first negative, then positive. In the first and negative stage, «there is a sense of being checked, or baffled, or even stupefied, or possibly even rebelled or menaced, as though something were affecting us which we could not receive, or grasp or stand up to». Then a positive stage follows in which the sublime object «forces its way into our imagination and emotion, distends or uplifts them to its own dimensions. We burst our own limit, go out to the sublime thing, identify ourselves ideally with it, and share its immense greatness» (10). In the words of Kant:

«The feeling of the sublime is a pleasure that arises only indirectly, being brought about by the feeling of a momentary check to the vital forces followed at once by a discharge all the more powerful, and so it is an emotion that seems to be no sport, but

dead earnest in the affairs of the imagination. Hence charms are repugnant to it; and since the mind is not simply attracted by the object, but is also alternately repelled thereby, the delight in the sublime does not so much involve positive pleasure as admiration or respect, i.e. merits the name of a negative pleasure» (11).

We do not intend to go into the criticisms and modifications that later writers have made to the Kantian view. In the main it squares with our actual experience; and a bare mention of it suffices for our present purpose which is not to discuss the sublime as such, but as it is related to the tragic.

(1) In the tragic, as in the sublime, the object which moves us possesses extraordinary greatness either in extent («Mathematical» in the Kantian terminology) or in power («dynamic» in the Kantian terminology) as its essential features. A molehill, a narrow stream, a gentle breeze, an infant of «pigmy size» or an ordinary deed of the man in the street does not impress us as sublime, nor could the quarrel in a country tavern, the bankruptcy of a green-grocer, the separation of Peter and Jane, the death of Harry the black-smith;

> Some natural sorrow, loss or pain
> That has been, and may be again

and many misfortunes of similar dimension produce the true tragic effect. It is the vault of heaven, the impetuous storm of whirlwind and dire hail, the ocean that stretches beyond the horizon, the moral courage of a Socrates or a Leonidas, or the omnipotent creator that says: «'Let there be light' and there was light» that inspire in us a sense of the sublime; it is the fall of Troy, the agony of Prometheus, the wandering of Oedipus, the death of Desdemona or Cordelia, extraordinary misfortunes of exceptional beings, that impress us as tragic.

Tragedy is a magnified mirror of human passions, activities and their consequences. Everything in it assumes a gigantic scale. This is why Aristotle in speaking of tragic action, insists on its having a certain magnitude. «The greater the length», he says in

Chapter VII, «the more beautiful will the piece be by reason of its size, provided that the whole be conspicuous». It is for the same reason that he requires the tragic hero to be a man above the average. «He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous — a personage like Oedipus, Thyestus and other illustrious men of such families». (Chapter XIII). This dictum has been of course often abused by mediocre writers, and modern critics have constantly held it in ridicule. It is argued, for instance, that human nature remains the same amid varying circumstances. «A poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition», says Dr. Johnson (12). Social ranks are merely accidental, but instincts, impulses and emotions are primordial and affect the heart of man without regard to the difference in professional standings. The pangs of despised love and the anguish of remorse are just as touching in a peasant as in an emperor. This is all true; but it is equally undeniable that the higher the personages, the greater the fall that follows, the more tragic would be the effect. No tale of misfortunes of a private citizen could possibly rival the sudden calamity of a prosperous prince which often carries with it consequences fatal to a whole community. If we examine the masterpieces of tragedy, we shall see that the usual practice of great tragedians bears out this truth. Among the Greeks, tragedy centres around the life of heroes and kings, God-like men whose fame was known and revered far and wide. French tragedy, modelled on the classical type, is even more rigid in selecting its personages. Even tragedies of the Romantic type do not offer any exception. Shakespeare's four great tragic-heroes, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and King Lear, an all men of high distinction.

Mere rank does not, of course, suffice to produce the tragic effect, through it helps a great deal. The tragic hero is moreover usually an exceptional human being, whose virtue and vice are above the common level, and in whom passion and will attain a terrible force. Even Iago and Cleopatra inspire in us a certain

amount of reverance and admiration, for in their vice and villainy they exhibit an intensity of life which is beyond our reach.

The so-called «bourgeois tragedy», though so much upheld by Diderot and Lessing, has seldom reached any high level of achievement. It is one of the many bubbles that rise from what D'Annunzio has contemptuously called «the grey flood of democratic mud». With the ascendance of the «Bourgeois tragedy», tragedy in its real sense has disappeared from the stage, and its place has been taken by the novel, the problem play and the moving picture. Balzac has written his «Père Goriot», Tourgénief has written his «King Lear of the Steppes». But what a miserable figure either of these tales of peasant life cuts beside the «King Lear» of Shakespeare! It is the Sistine vault copied in miniature on a tiny plaque. With the disappearance of hero-worship, every thing is levelled down to the reach of common humanity, the sense of the sublime dwindles and Tragedy dies.

(2) Again, in the tragic as in the sublime, images of immeasurable magnitude thrust upon us a sense of our own feebleness and insignificance, «a sense of being cheked, or baffled, or even stupefied, or possibly even repelled or menaced», as Prof. Bradley has put it. In the sublime, the cause of such a feeling of awe and wonder is the tremendous power it exhibits; in the tragic, this power takes the form of fate. The fear of Tragedy is nothing but the sense of our own feebleness and insignificance before the overwhelming power of fate; it is what Kant has called «a momentary check» in the contemplation of the sublime, whether Aristotle has meant it to be so or not. It is not the fear in ordinary reality felt before some imminent danger for some individual person; it is the fear that enters in the aesthetic contemplation of the power of an unknown hand which controls the destiny of man in a way that is both unintelligible and unavoidable. It is the sort of fear that Eliphaz speaks of in the «Book of Job»:

«In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made

all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof».

«I could not discern the form thereof», that is the essence of tragic fear. Fear would not become tragic, if its object is clearly discerned and intelligible. It is for this reason that tragic fear has no specified individual object, such as the tragic hero or ourselves. An example will make our meaning clear. Let us say, the «Oedipus» of Sophocles inspires in us a kind of fear. Now this fear is felt certainly not for Oedipus, for actual fear is generally awakened by the prospect of some future danger, and his calamity is an accomplished fact past any retrieve; nor can it be felt for ourselves, for there is the least possibility that a simliar misfortune — that of killing one's own father and marrying one's own mother in ignorance — should fall on us. So it is not a fear with parricide and incest as its specific object. In the same way, we do not fear before «Prometheus Bound» the punishment of Jupiter for the crime of stealing fire from Heaven, nor befor «Iphigenia at Aulis» the fate of being sacrificed by a paternal decree, nor before «Faust» the dreadful consequence of selling one's soul to a devil. In every case, it is the fear before the cruel and capricious visage of the Moirae, who have wrought all these «old, unhappy far-off things». It may be intense, but it is very vague. Thus in our analysis, tragic fear resembles tragic pity in some important aspects. They are both the result of a sudden visualization of the unintelligibility and irrevocability of fate and the insignificance and feebleness of man; none of them are directed towards any clearly discernible object or distinctly for any individual persons; they remain the same wherever the events impress us as tragic, although the piteous and fearful circumstances may vary a great deal. Now we can see how much Aristotle's critics and commentators are in error when they say that we fear for ourselves lest similar misfortunes should fall on ourselves. There is no scope in the domain of

tragedy for egoists to exercice their power of calculating personal loss or gain!

(3) Like the «momentary check» of the sublime, tragic fear is only a step towards the positive feeling of elevation and edification. If it is nothing more than fear, it would become mere terror and leave us gloomy and depressed. But tragedy, as all agree, uplifts us, in spite of, or as we should say, because of, its fearful nature. It calls forth an extraordinary amount of vital energy to cope with an extraordinary situation. It makes us equal to a tremendous task which in actual reality we can hardly hope to accompanish. This is of course all done in imagination. We identify ourselves ideally and more or less unconsciously with Prometheus, Oedipus, Lear and such-like gigantic figures, struggling with a power that all hold to be supreme, unconquered even before utter ruin or frightful death. Writing of the Aeschylean Cosmology, Prof. Macneille Dixon has very well observed: «The sorrows of the world in the Aeschylean conception appear to be less the result of sin and error than the inevitable accompaniments of a great essay, comparable to the pains and perils of the explorer or climber of a virgin peak» (15). Tragedy, as we shall explain more fully in Chapter XI, awakens the sense of human worth by putting man to a difficult task. It gives him a scope of life which is denied to him in the actual world of compromise of mediocrity. The pleasure it gives is now easy to explain: it is a pleasure that always accompanies overflowing life and intense activity.

The tragic is, then, a mode of the sublime. But these two things are not co-extensive: the tragic is always sublime, but the sublime is not always tragic. What is, then, the differentiating attribute which marks off the tragic from other modes of the sublime? It is the emotion of pity. We have seen that pity alone is not sufficient to produce the tragic effect, nor is fear sufficient to do so. Tragedy, however terrible the events it represents, has always something tender in it, something that endears itself to our heart, something that makes us feel regretful for the final cata-

strophe. This element constitutes what has been generally called «pity» in Tragedy. It is the feeling of pity that the sense of the sublime in its widest sense lacks. To illustrate the difference by an example, let us compare the Tragedy of «King Lear» with a thunder storm with which it is usually compared. Both exhibit a tremendous power; both awaken a sense of human feebleness and insignifiance; both, again, make us to burst our own limits and share their immense greatness. But a thunder storm would never awaken the pity which we feel at the suffering of Lear or at the death of Cordelia. If we feel pity before a sublime object, immediately it ceases to be sublime for us. The sublime as a mode of beauty may be said to be just the opposite of the piteous. The wonder about Tragedy is that it combines the two opposites.

To define the Tragic «per genus et differentias», we may say, then, that it is a sub-species of the sublime, sharing with all members of the class the common property of fear-inspiring but uplifting power; it differs from other modes of the sublime in that it tempers fear with pity. The sublime, as Kant and others have analysed, excites two different emotions: fear first, then wonder or admiration. As the sublime is the most important ingredient of the tragic, Aristotle's list of tragic emotions is perhaps incomplete. Corneille is perhaps right in thinking that admiration should be added to pity and fear.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IDEA OF JUSTICE IN TRAGEDY: CHARACTER AND FATE.

I.

In our discussion of sympathy in Tragedy, we have touched in passing upon the problem of justice. As it is of supreme importance to the psychology of tragic pleasure, we propose to go into it in more details.

The long dispute among European critics about «Poetic Justice» in Tragedy was launched by Aristotle in his discussion of the tragic hero. We cannot do better than take his view on the subject as the starting point of our discussion. The famous passage in Chapter XIII of the «Poetics» runs as follows:

«In the first place the change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity; for this moves neither pity nor fear, it merely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity, for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy, it

possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense, nor calls forth pity or fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter villain be exhibited. A plot of this kind would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. Such an event will be neither pitiful nor terrible. There remains, then, the character between these two extremes — that of a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty» (1).

Further on he mentions another kind of Tragedy, which, like the «Odyssey», has a double catastrophe — prosperity for the good and misfortune for the wicked. He observes, however, that «it is accounted the best because of the weakness of the spectators». «The pleasure thence derived is not the true tragic pleasure».

Now if we examine these classes of tragic hero both in theory and in practice, we shall find it an easy task to tear Aristotle's doctrine into pieces. Notice first that elsewhere he speaks only of pity and fear, here he introduces a third element, i.e. moral sense. (We have followed Butcher in using «moral sense» for the Greek word « Τὸ Φιλάνθροπον », Butcher sometimes uses «the sense of justice» to render the same word; Bywater uses however «human feeling» (2), which. though etymologically more correct, is rather vague). Pity and fear constitute for him the true tragic emotions. When he condemns the Tragedy with a double catastrophe, he does so on an aesthetic ground, for «the pleasure thence derived is not the true tragic pleasure». But when he excludes the downfall of the utter villain, he does so on both aesthetic and moral grounds, for «it neither satisfies the moral sense, nor calls forth pity and fear». The same thing may be said of the first class of the tragic hero: The downfall of a virtuous man is «abominable» or «merely shocks us». Throughout the passage he does not seem however to lay stress on «moral sense», so the

downfall of the utter villain and the «double catastrophe», though morally satisfactory, are excluded. But the mere fact that he does introduce moral considerations into the discussion of Tragedy is very significant, and it has caused a good deal of confusion among his commentators.

The reasons which he gives for excluding certain classes of tragic hero are equally open to criticism. His first instance is the virtuous man passing from prosperity to adversity. It undoubtedly shocks our moral sense, as all tragic events do to a certain extent. But why should it be unable to excite pity and fear? In real life the undeserved sufferings of saints and martyrs ars often tragic in the highest degree. What misfortunes bring home to us more vividly the terror of the work of fate than the condemnation of Socrates, the ostracism of Aristides, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the burning of Jeanne d'Arc as a witch and many other similar calamities? Would the Stagirite have us to believe that these personages are not pitiable? If we turn to Tragedy, which is the mirror of life and nature, it is even more true that:

Just or unjust, alike seem miserable
For oft alike both come to an evil end.

Thus Prometheus was chained to a rock to be tortured by vultures and inclement weather for no other crime than his love for mankind; Antigone died for no other sin than performing her sacred duty to her dead brother; Hippolytus was torn to pieces because he refused to enter into incestuous relation with his step mother, Cordelia was murdered in prison for her filial piety. There is no end to the woeful tale. Did the cases of Antigone, Hippolytus and other great Greek tragic figures escape Aristotle's attention when he put a ban on the downfall of the virtuous man? Corneille, a man of fine poetic sensibility though a timid critic, did not hesitate to put a christian martyr, Polyeucte, on the scene. In order to justify his own practice, he took certain exceptions to the Aristotelian rule. The virtuous man, he maintained, could be represented in Tragedy under certain circumstances. He fell a victim

to Lessing's rather unjust ridicule. «The mere throught is itself terrible», says the author of «Hamburg Dramaturgy», «that there should be human beings who can be wretched without any guilt of their own». Yes, we answer for Corneille, it is terrible, but such monstrosities do often happen both in life and in Tragedy. Schiller, Lessing's great successor, wrote the tragedy of the «Maid of Orleans», whose fate is perhaps even more terrible than that of Polyeucte.

Setting aside the second class of tragic hero — that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity — as admittedly untragic, we come to the downfall of the utter villain. Aristotle says that it arouses neither pity nor fear. This is of course true if pity and fear are taken in the moral sense, but not so if they are taken in the aesthetic sense. The utter villain may become a tragic hero, if he shows a superhuman persistency and a gigantic force in his wickedness. Tartuffe is comic only because he is a timid villain and his behaviour betrays meanness. He lacks the strength and grandeur of a Satan or a Mephistopheles. Shakespeare's Shylock, on the other hand, though wrongly put in a comedy, is really a tragic figure, because his cruelty and his passion for revenge attain such an intensity as to impress us with the sense of the sublime. Without this touch of tragic grandeur, he would be a mere Harpagon. In Tragedy it is not wickedness, but weakness, that is the death-bell. Wickedness on a grand scale is often sublime as in the Satan of Milton and the Mephistopheles of Goethe. On rare occasions it is raised to the tragic as in Shakespeare's «Richard III», and in Corneille's Cleopatra. Here we may again quote the fine observation of the grand Corneille in the defense of his «Rodogune»:

«La plupart des poèmes, tant anciens que modernes, demeureraient en un pitoyable état, si l'on en retranchait tout ce qui s'y rencontre de personnages méchants ou vicieux, ou touchés de quelque faiblesse qui s'accorde mal avec la vertu.... Cléopâtre, dans «Rodogune», est très méchante; il n'y a point de parricide qui lui fasse horreur, pourvu qu'il la puisse conserver sur un trône

qu'elle préfère à toutes choses, tant son attachement à la domination est violent; mais tous ces crimes sont accompagnés d'une grandeur d'âme qui a quelque chose de si haut, qu'en même temps qu'on déteste ses actions, on admire la source dont elles partent» (3).

«Une grandeur d'âme», that is the essential thing in Tragedy; whether that grandeur is exhibited by a virtuous man or a villain does not matter much from the aesthetic point of view. The point is also well brought out by Schiller when he thus illustrates the «contradiction between the aesthetic and the moral judgment»:

«Theft, for example is a thing absolutely base, ... it is always an indelible brand stamped upon the thief, and aesthetically speaking, he will always remain a base object.... But suppose this man is at the same time a murderer, he is more to be condemned than before by the moral law. But in the aesthetic judgment he is raised one degree higher. . . . He who abases himself by a vile action can to a certain extent be raised by a crime, and can be thus reinstated in our aesthetic estimation. ... In the presence of a deep and horrible crime we no longer think of the quality but of the awful consequences of the action. . . . Directly we begin to tremble, all the delicacies of taste are reduced to silence. ... In a word the base element disappears in the terrible »(4).

Here Schiller has shown clearly how utter wickedness can arouse tragic fear. The fear as he describes it is certainly not the fear in the moral sense, felt for ourselves lest similar misfortunes should fall on us; but the fear in the aesthetic sense, felt before the image of the sublime. This may be taken as a strong support to our view of tragic fear as outlined in the preceding Chapter. But it may be asked: How can the downfall of an utter villain awaken in us the tragic emotion of pity? Tragic pity, as we have seen, is not felt for the tragic hero as an individual person, but for mankind in general before the unintelligible and uncontrolable force of fate. It is essentially a feeling of regret, and the regret is caused by a sense of waste. In the downfall of an utter villain,

we often feel this sense of waste when we reflect upon the fact that such super-human persistency and gigantic force as he possesses should have turned to serve destructive purposes. We wish it to have been otherwise; and, as it turns out against our natural desire, we say: what a pity that such a state of things should ever happen! Characters like Iago in Shakespeare's «Othello» or Narcisse in Racine's «Britannicus» are extremely offensive to our moral sense, and no amount of misfortune can call forth our pity for them as individual beings. But when we cast a glance on the wide frame of the universe in which such hideous figures are set, our hatred for the villain will sink in our pity for humanity in general, and our sense of justice will be lost in the contemplation of horror. The Aristotelian view that the downfall of an utter villain can awaken neither pity nor fear cannot be accepted.

II.

We now come to the crucial point. Aristotle's ideal tragic hero is «a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty». The Greek word « ἁμαΡΤια » is rather vague and ambiguous. But whether is means a moral error or an intellectual error does not matter much, all that matters is that there must be an error of some sort on the part of the hero, like the heel of Achilles, to account for his misfortune. It is this idea of «hamartia» or frailty that gives rise to the idea of Justice in Tragedy. The catastrophe is somehow deserved. A man with a more perfect character than the tragic hero would have avoided it.

It is this idea of «hamartia» which we want to call in question. The problem about the suffering of the tragic hero may be put thus: Is there any causal link between character and fate? If there be such a link, then the hero is responsible to a certain extent for his misfortune; he may be too severely punished, yet it is still a sort of punishment. Thus a sense of justice goes into the making

of our conscious experience in the contemplation of Tragedy. On the other hand, if there be no causal link between character and fate, then the hero is a victim of fate rather than of his own weakness.

Aristotle did not formulate the problem in such a clear-cut fashion, still less did he give any explicit answer. But judging form his demand for «harmartia» and from the general drift of his discussion of the tragic hero, he seems to tend towards the former alternative, i.e. the tragic catastrophe is somehow a punishment for weakness or error in the character.

The question is: Is such the view held by the great Greek tragic poets? It is true that most heroes in Greek tragedy do exhibit what Aristotle has called «Hamartia» or error, such as Oedipus' impetuosity or Creon's obstinacy. But the problem is not whether a hero has shown some weakness or not, for born imperfect as man is, some little flaw may be detected even in the life of a saint; it is whether such weakness is the determining force of the tragic action, that is to say, whether the poet intends to attribute the hero's ruin to his weakness. No one who has given even only a casual perusal to Greek tragedies would hesitate to answer the question with an emphatic «no!»

Take the Orestian Trilogy for instance. Looking on the surface of the matter, one might think that the whole tragedy centers around the theme of justice, and Aeschylus seems to try constantly to convince us that it was so conceived. «While Zeus is lord of the world», he says in the «Agamemnon», «it is fixed that all who sin shall suffer» (5). Again in the «Choephoroe», «The anvil block of justice is planted firm» (6). But was Agamenmon to blame when he was doomed from his birth to retribute a family crime in which he had no share? Or, was Orestes in the wrong when his crime was preordained by Apollo? Throughout the works of Aeschylus one is always impressed with the idea of the insignificance of man and the omnipotence of Fate. The song of the Oceanides in the

«Prometheus Bound» may be taken as representing the Aeschylean conception of life:

See now, oh friend, how thankless was the grace.
Say, where is aid? How helps the ephemeral race?
And knowest thou not the puny helpless kind,
Idle as dreams,
Which cramps that people to the light left blind?
No, never can what Zeus has predesigned
Be crossed by mortal's schemes (7).

Here is the essence of the tragic sense, and think with Aristotle that such an insignificant thing as what he has called «hamartia» could mar or make a man's fortune in a world as Aeschylus has conceived it!

Turn to the «Oedipus »of Sophocles, Aristotle's ideal tragedy, the same idea of fatality prevails. Oedipus, a virtuous man and a prosperous king, beloved of all his subjects, became all of a sudden the unexpected victim of divine anger at the highest point of his fortune. His crime was hideous indeed; he had killed his own father and married his own mother. A criminal case like this would not constitute a tragedy. Tragedy comes in only when the crime was not intentional and yet the punishment of it was no less severe. The evil deeds of Oedipus were all done in ignorance, and what is more important, they were pre-ordained by Apollo and foretold by the Oracle of Delphi. Oedipus tried to evade his fated crime, but his good intention did not avail. It is surely wide from the mark to say that his downfall was due to his own frailty. Or to take another example from Sophocles, what «hamartia» could Aristotle possibly detect in the character of Antigone? Her very virtue became the cause of her suffering, and herein lies her tragedy. Listen to her own words: «What law of Heaven have I transgressed? Why, helpless one, should I look to the Gods any more — what ally should I avoke — when by piety I have earned the name of impious?» (8). To such an agonizing appeal Aristotle seems to have turned a deaf ear.

Much has been said about the rising importance of character in the drama of Euripides. If Aristote's dictum could be justified at all, it is certainly to Euripides that we should look for some evidence. But here again we shall be disappointed. It is true, as Schlegel has remarked, that in Euripides «fate is seldom the invinsible spirit of the whole composition, the fundamental thought of the tragic world». But the idea of fatality, if weakened, is still there. Both Aeschylus and Sophocles had been pious men and did not openly call the infallibility of Divine Justice in question. Euripides, a sceptic, did not hesitate to lay the evils of man before the door of the Gods. Hippolytus was doomed to a terrible death for his negligence towards Aphrodite; Pantheus was torn to pieces by his own mother for his refusal to worship a new God, Bacchus; Heracles became mad and shot his own wife and children, because such had been the pleasure of Hera; Iphigenia was sacrificed at Aulis, because the Gods would not accept a lower price for the wind they lent to the Greek fleet. All these instances show that Euripides, whom Aristotle regarded as «the most tragic of the poets» did not share his idea of tragic «hamartia».

Looking on the Greek tragedy on the whole, we may say that it reflects a rather sombre outlook of life. Man, born weak and ignorant, was doomed to an eternal struggle in which he had for his antagonists not only the jealous Gods, but also the blank Fate and capricious Fortune. Over him there was always an overwhelming force, which, like a hanging cliff, was ready to fall and crush him at any moment. Such state of affaires he had neither power to resist, nor wisdom to understand. The origin of evils and the idea of justice undoubtedly did often come to haunt his mind. But he could hardly be brought to believe that he could undo the decrees of the Gods, or that he was the master of his own fate. Aeschylus and Sophocles were just as perplexed as Agamemnon and Oedipus. They dared not impeach heaven openly for injustice, yet neither would they place the responsibility of evils entirely on man. The contradictions in their utterings betrayed their perplexity

and enhanced their sense of fate. It is often said that Greek tragedy had its root in religion. But religion in the modern sense of the word is generally accompanied with a consistent theology, and it is difficult to deduce a consistent theology from Greek tragedies. As we shall discuss more fully in Chapter XII, the spirit of Tragedy does not accord well with a definite religious belief. The mind of the Greek tragic poets is full of the perplexity and melancholy that often lead to a religious conversion; it is never that of a religious convert. This is why the idea of fate occupies a prominent place with them as with most primitive peoples whose superstitious beliefs and aboriginal myths have not crystallized into a religious faith.

Greek tragedy is a vast structure which stretches from earth to heaven and in which men have commerce with the Gods. Detach it from its primitive mythological background and from its fatalistic outlook of life, and analyse it from a purely rationalistic point of view, you will miss its very essence and catch only its pale spectre. This was what Aristotle did. In his «Poetis» he preserved a dead silence on the subject of fatality which had so much troubled the Greeks ever since Homer. This striking omission cannot be attributed to his carelessness. In the third book of his «Ethics» where he discusses voluntary and involuntary actions, he blames one of the heroes of Euripides, Alcmeon, for having killed his mother in revenge of his father. He does not accept Alcmeon's excuse that his crime was pre-ordained by the Gods. The circumstances of this lost tragedy of Euripides, as we may gather from its fragment, were similar to those of the Orestian Trilogy. We wonder what Aristotle would say about the idea of fatality expressed in Aeschylus' masterpiece. Arguing by analogy, we may suppose that he would condemn it as well. Writing at a time when Greek tragedy was already on the decline, and Greece had emerged from a dark mythological world to an enlightened world where the sophists tried to explain everything in terms of cause and effect, Aristotle, a rationalist of slight poetic temper, could

hardly be expected to enter into the spirit of the early Greek tragic poets. «L'idée antique de la fatalité perdait chaque jour son influence sur la scene tragique», as M. Egger has well remarked, «parce qu'elle perdait de sa force dans les consciences» (9). In the time of Alexander, the idea of fatality, we may suppose, had lost its hold on man's mind altogether. Aristotle was the last man in the world who would bring the Moirae to resurrection. The very notion of Fate would endanger the moral order of the world and deprive man of both his freedom and his responsibility. This explains why he introduced the idea of «Hamartia» to account for the misfortune of the tragic hero.

III.

Modern tragedy, in its essential spirit, traces its pedigree to Euripides rather than to Aeschylus and Sophocles. Its searching light has been gradually turning from the larger cosmological issues to the mind of man. Love, jealousy, ambition, honour, anger, revenge, inner conflicts and social problems — these are the moving forces in a Shakespeare, a Racine, or an Ibsen. It is a tragedy of the secular type, in which the link of cause and effect no longer stretches from Zeus to man but is to be sought within the narrow sphere of human experience. Man is now more a free agent than a puppet of the blind Fate, consequently he assumes an increasingly greater responsibility for his own actions and passions. So Aristotle's dictum of «hamartia» stands the test better in modern tragedy than in the tragedy of his own time. But even here it is only to be accepted with certain large reservations.

Let us examine Shakespeare, perhaps the greatest representative of the moderns. His attitude towards dramatic justice, like his attitude towards all other abstract problems, is very enigmatic. What agent does he hold responsible for misfortunes and evils, divine force or human character? Authorities differ in their opinions. Dr. Johnson, for example, regards Shakespeare's breach

of «poetic justice» as «his first defect». He complains in the famous «Preface to Shakespeare»:

«He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. ... He makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always the writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place» (10).

Johnson represents one extreme, the opposite extreme is represented by a German critic, Gervinus, who wrote under the influence of both Aristotle and Hegel. He eliminates the notion of Fate entirely from Shakespeare's tragedies and attributes the cause of tragic suffering in every case to some weakness in the character of the hero. Thus Tragedy in his view is governed by the principle of Justice. Even Cordelia and Desdemona are not so innocent as they are generally supposed to be. Where, then, lies the justice of Cordelia's death? Gervinus answers:

«She attacks England with a French army in order to restore her father. The whole responsibility for this step falls on her. So long as she lived and warred, it might be feared that she would subject the whole kingdom to France. This idea, however, or the possibility that a French army could conquer on English ground, Shakespeare's patriotic feeling never even allows him to admit. Cordelia falls a sacrifice to her own nature» (11).

In the case of Desdemona, the guilt is even more evident. She eloped with a black Moor without her father's consent. Even the dropping of her handkerchief is brought by Gervinus as a charge against her carelessness. She, too, «falls a victim to her own nature, to a nature which oversteps the limits of social custom, unites guilt and innocence in strange combination, and draws

death as a punishment on itself». In a similar manner, Gervinus interprets one play after another and finds all Shakesperean heroes guilty and justly punished.

Some English scholars, J. S. Smart and A. C. Bradley for example, steer the middle course between these two extremes. According to Smart, «the influence of external and arbitrary events on the destiny of the individual is symbolised for Shakespeare by the Goddess Fortune». «The belief that there is something arbitrary and irrational in human experience is fundamental in Shakespeare's thought». Thus he recognizes the importance of Fate in Shakespeare. But he thinks it «a misrepresentation of Shakespeare to suggest that he sees no means of escaping or modifying Fortune's decrees. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare combines the notion of Fate with the notion of Justice and preserves a certain balance between them» (12).

In our view these two ideas are contradictory to each other and cannot be reconciled, as the idea of Fate implies the impotence of human will, whereas the idea of Justice emphasizes its freedom and responsibility. We shall explain this point more fully when we come to discuss Bradley's view in the next Chapter. Meanwhile it may be pointed out that the argument of Smart is unconvincing and even self-contradictory. «Shakespeare speaks of Fortune», he admits, «as a power higher than the human will, by which men are blindly controlled». But he goes on to say in the same breath: «We are not helpless in Fortune's presence, and we can control her, if we can control ourselves. This conclusion is the very core of Shakespeare's philosophy». He quotes several passages to substantiate his statement concerning the omnipresence of Fortune, but to support his view on the control of man over his Fortune, he gives only one solitary passage from «Hamlet». It is Hamlet's praise of Horatio:

> for thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
> A man that fortune's buffets and rewards

Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please.

The meaning of this passage is quite clear. Hamlet, himself a «passion's slave», admires the stoic calm and indifference of his friend. To remain unmoved alike in prosperity and in adversity is one thing; to control fortune, or to «escape or modify her decrees», is quite another. Socrates deserves perhaps even a higher praise for his indifference to «Fortune's buffets and rewards», but his tragic fate was not on that account avoided. Either Smart has grossly misinterpreted Hamlet's meaning, or he quotes a passage to substantiate his statement, which really cannot substantiate it at all.

Fate and Justice cannot be reconciled, we have to choose between the two alternatives: Either Fate or Justice is the guiding principle in Tragedy. In the case of Shakespeare, he does not seem to constitute himself an impartial judge of virtue and wickedness. In most of his great masterpieces there is always a «dead March» in the end, in which the corpses of the virtuous are exhibited alongside of those of the wicked without any distinction. Thus Hamlet fell with Claudius, Othello with Iago, Macduff with Macbeth, King Lear and Cordelia with Goneril and Regan. In the end, Death's finger points to the virtuous as well as to the wicked. With all his neo-classic prejudices, Dr. Johnson has at least a strong common sense, and his description of Shakespeare's method in tragedy is essentially correct, though we do not endorse his view that disregard for justice is Shakespeare's first defect.

To examine Shakespeare's idea about character and Fate as expressed in his great masterpieces would be impossible within the narrow limits of our present thesis. Let a single instance suffice. Perhaps the idea of Fate is nowhere else so prominent in Shakespeare's plays as in «King Lear». Almost every character in it has made some remarks on the operation of a divine power.

There is one passage which is particularly interesting as it sounds like an eloquent denial of Fate. When Gloucester expresses his fear about some recent omens: «These late eclipses in the sun and moon pertend no good to us», his illegitimate son, Edgar, derides him in these words:

«This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, — oft the surfeit of our own behaviour — we make guilty of our own disasters, the sun, the moon and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly convulsion. ..an admirable evasion of man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star».

Shall we take this passage as representing Shakespeare's idea about character and Fate? If it does represent his view, then he might be regarded as a strong exponent of the doctrine of justice, stronger even than Aristotle himself. But it should be remembered that he has put it in the mouth of a villain, and that villains are generally cynical. Let us listen to what Shakespeare has put in the mouth of the virtuous characters in the play. Lear's famous complaint:

I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning

is more than justifid by his sufferings. So is Cordelia's calm but bitter remark:

We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.

It is Kent's firm belief that:

The stars above us govern our condition.

Gloucester is even more explicit in his accusation of the injustice of the Gods:

As flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods,
They kill us for their sport.

All these words were spoken at the critical moment of the action. They cannot be taken as mere random remarks without significance to the whole play. Indeed they strike the key-note and

give us the essence of tragic sense. It is rather surprising to hear Prof. Bradley say that the idea of Fate does not often occur to him in reading Shakespeare.

To illustrate the sense of Fate in its more modern form, let us turn to Ibsen. Perhaps individualism is nowhere carried to such an extreme as in his works, consequently character seems to count far more than fate. But even with him the dictum «Character makes destiny» is never fully realized. Most of his heroes and heroines are, like Dr. Thomas Stockmann in «An enemy of the People», victims of social systems and dead beliefs. Tragedy arises mainly from the impotence of individuals in their struggle against social forces. These forces, though explainable in terms of cause and effect, weigh no less heavy on men and women than the old-fashioned blind fate. They represent the Goddesses of Fate in our modern rationalistic world. To the victims they are no less formidable and irresistible than fate. Nor is it to be understood that fatalism of a primitive form is entirely absent in Ibsen. The «Ghosts», one of his masterpieces, might be regarded as an Orestian Trilogy in a minor key. Oswald Alving, like Agamemnon, is doomed to the retribution of ancestrial sins; he suffers «a living death», because he has inherited his father's disease. He is quite conscious of its injustice:

Oswald: Never to be able to work any more! Never! Never! A living death! Mother, can you imagine anything so horrible?

Mrs Alving: My poor unhappy boy? How has this terrible thing happened?

Oswald: That is just what I cannot possibly understand. I have never lived recklessly, in any sense. You must believe that of me, mother! I have never done that.

Mrs. Alving: I haven't a doubt of it, Oswald.

Oswald: And yet this comes upon me all the same! — this terrible disaster! (13).

If this is not fatalism in every sense of the word, what else is it? It is not our purpose to give a full account of the idea of

fate in modern tragedy. The instances just given are sufficient to show that even in modern tragedy where character assumes an increasingly higher importance, the decisive force that leads to a tragic catastrophe is often not the character itself, but Fate in its primitive or modified forms. That is to say, the doctrine of dramatic justice is no more applicable to the moderns than to the ancients.

IV.

It is now perhaps obvious that the Aristotelian idea of «hamartia» with its offspring, the doctrine of poetic justice, cannot be accepted from the strict aesthetic point of view. But if we dismiss it without further ado, we would do Aristotle a gross injustice. As it may be seen in Chapter II, we have recognized in the main the difference between the aesthetic and the moral experience and the independence of real tragic pleasure from moral considerations. But we have also emphasized the fact that a pure aesthetic experience is only an abstract notion and that in life as an organic whole the aesthetic moment would never come if moral sence has not in some way satisfied or left undisturbed. When all is said against the Aristotelian idea of «hamartia», there still lurks an arrière pensée that the idea of justice does often thrust itself upon us in the sight of misfortunes and calamities. Man is after all a moral being, and his moral sense does exercise a decisive influence on the initiation, maintenance or loss of aesthetic attitude in the appreciation of Tragedy. Such considerations are extremely troublesome, as they present to us a difficult dilemma: either Tragedy has nothing to do with moral sense at all, but this statement is not always warranted by actual facts; or the idea of justice does contribute to our pleasure in Tragedy, but this would seem to endanger the position we have taken with regard to the purity and autonomy of aesthetic experience. In scientific matters, whenever there is really a dilemma, it requires perhaps even more intellectual

force and courage to acknowledge it than to make short way of the trouble by sticking obstinately to an established dogma without a regard for contradictory facts.

Such a dilemma, we believe, must have troubled Aristotle when he grapples with the problem of tragic hero. He hesitates a good deal in what he says, sometimes he even contradicts himself. Now he claims for art a total independence from morality, then he attributes the tragic catastrophe to some weakness in the character and advises the tragic poets not to shock our moral sense. Now he condemns the preference for happy ending as a sign of weakness of the spectators, then he excludes the exhibition of the downfall of a virtuous man. Shall we blame him for such inconsistencies? Those who know the complexity of the problem will perhaps look at them with an indulgent eye. Aristotle, we are told, is a peripatetic; he walks while he thinks and teaches. It is natural that he seldom comes to stand on any dogma which does not satisfy him. It shows his subtlety as well as his candidness. His omission of the idea of Fate in Tragedy is of course to be regretted, but one must make allowance for his rationalistic habit of thinking.

It is a fair question for discussion, whether the dilemma just mentioned is a real one. In our opinion it can be surmounted by adopting the theory of Psychical Distance as outlined in Chapter II. In aesthetics as well as in ethics, Aristotle is always loyal to the idea of «Golden Mean». Translated into modern psychological language, the «Golden Mean» is exactly what we mean by an appropriate «distance». According to the theory of Psychical Distance, art should not go so far in maintaining its autonomy as to disregard moral sense altogether, nor should it degenerate in a trite moral lesson. This is just what Aristotle demands of the tragic hero. He should not be too good, otherwise his misfortune would shock us; nor should he be too wicked, for in that case our sympathy could not be aroused. The ideal tragic hero is a good man with some frailty or weakness. Perhaps Aristotle may not, as his commentators generally suppose, imply the idea of justice. The

tragic catastrophe may not be consciously regarded as a punishment for the frailty or weakness in the character, but that frailty or weakness may serve somehow to reconcile our feeling to the terrible end which would otherwise be repugnant to those in whom the moral sense outweighs the aesthetic sense. Johnson's incapability to endure the last scenes of «King Lear» is a strong proof. From the aesthetic point of view, the preference for a hero with some frailty is just like the preference for a tragedy with a double catastrophe like the «Odyssey», which Aristotle condemns as a sign of the weakness of the spectators. But constituted as man is, there is no help for his weakness in aesthetic taste. A wise playwright would accept the weakness of the spectators as a fact, and mould his art so as to be appreciated by them as well as by the «élite». This is of course a practical wisdom rather than an infrangible rule. It is just as a practical wisdom, and not as an infrangible rule, that the Aristotelian doctrine of «Hamartia» might be defended. If this doctrine has exercised any evil influence on later poets and critics, the fault is certainly not Aristotle's.

CHAPTER VII.

HEGEL'S THEORY OF TRAGEDY AND PROF. BRADLEY'S RESTATEMENT OF IT.

I.

The doctrine of Justice in Tragedy assumes various forms, that of Aristotle finds a distant echo in the theory of Hegel. Though the latter is more speculative and is based on a vaster system of metaphysics, it resembles the Aristotelian idea of «Hamartia» in that both try to vindicate the moral order of the world and both are optimistic in their general tendency. As Hegel has exercised an enormous influence on modern aesthetic thought, we propose to examine his theory of tragedy in some details.

Broadly speaking, the Hegelian theory of Tragedy is a special application of his much wider metaphysical principle of the Identity of opposites, or affirmation through negation. The universe as he conceives it, is governed by rational laws and everything in it can be rationalistically explained or justified. These rational laws are ranged according to their value in an ascending scale which ends in the Absolute or Idea. What appear to be discords in the

lower scale may be resolved into a higher harmony; even evils may contribute to the ultimate good. The Absolute or Idea is the ultimate unity in which all opposites, discords and contradictions are dissolved: it is the universal in which all individuals lose their particularities. But such ultimate Idea is not abstract, but concrete; the universal is immanent in the individual. This is especially true of art, for art is the Idea manifesting itself in a sensuous object, «the shining of the absolute through the veils of the sense-world». These two factors in art are in common parlance called «content» and «form». The Idea as such is infinite, free and one; but when it has issued in sensuous objects which are finite, determined and plural, there is a contradiction. In art however, such a contradiction must be overcome, the two distinct sides of content and form, of unity and plurality and of the infinite and the finite must be bound together to form an organic whole. In the Hegelian language, the thesis and antithesis are melted together in a higher synthesis. Synthesis is the identity which reconciles the opposites.

Tragedy is a particular instance of art and it follows the general laws of the identity of opposites. In Tragedy however, the opposites constitute the «conflict» and Identity takes the form of «reconciliation». The content of art, as we have said, is the Idea, which, in Tragedy, consists of the essential universal and rational interests of humanity, the spiritual forces which rule the world of man's will and action. But as art has no dealings with abstractions, but moves in the individual and concrete sensuous world, these spiritual forces have to appear in the form of rational human emotions such as family affection, filial piety, parental tenderness, honour, duty, loyalty, patriotism, devotion to religion etc.. The personages in Tragedy are the incarnations of these ethical forces. Each of the tragic characters identifies him or her-self with one of these ethical forces and carries it through to the end with an uncompromising self-consistency.

The ultimate power which animates a tragedy is then the Idea or, as Hegel sometimes calls it, the Divine Being. As the Idea is parcelled out among individual wills and purposes, the identity splits itself into opposites. The spiritual forces are isolated and exclusive, and as a result, they become hostile to one another. For instances, a hero devoted to the service of the state has often to neglect his family duty, a heroine may find it difficult to reconcile love with honour, etc.. When two of such isolated forces come to face each other and each sticks to its own one-sided exclusive demand, the result is the tragic conflict. Tragedy arises, then, out of a collision of two incompatible ethical forces.

Each of the two conflicting ethical forces is justifiable in itself. Honour is no less good than love, nor is filial piety less praiseworthy than loyalty to the state. But as each is one-sided and exclusive, and each negates and denies the equally justifiable claim of the other, they have no place in a univrese where harmonious cooperation of various spiritual forces is essential to its very existence. So they each contain the seed of their own doom. The result is either that they are both destroyed or that they renounce their exclusive one-sided claims. What is generally called a «tragic dénouement» takes either one or the other of these forms, a violent catastrophe or a reconciliation.

As an example of a violent catastrophe in which both the conflicting forces are nullified, we may take the «Antigone» of Sophocles which Hegels regards as the most perfect exemplar of tragedies. Creon the King decrees that the corpse of Polyneices shall be left unburied, as he has brought a foreign army against his own native city. Antigone, the sister of Polyneices and the fiançée of Creon's son, Haemon, disobeys the royal edict and buries her brother. Creon, despite the remonstrance of his son, persists in exacting the penalty. Antigone, immured in a rocky chamber to starve, hangs her-self just a moment after Creon has sent message to pardon her. But she is not unavenged. Haemon, in despair of her death, commits suicide and Creon's Queen re-

fuses to survive her son, thus leaving Creon miserable on a lonely throne. Now in Hegel's view, both the king and the maid are right: Creon is right in maintaining the authority and welfare of the State, Antigone is right in maintaining the sanctity of her family duty. But they are also both wrong: Creon is wrong in violating the honour due to the dead, Antigone is wrong in breaking the law of her king and her future father-in-law. The right of each is pushed into a wrong because it is one-sided and exclusive, so both are punished.

But a tragic conflict may sometimes result in a reconciliation. Hegel gives the «Eumenides» of Aeschylus as an example. Clytemnestra has murdered her husband, Agamemnon, to avenge the death of her daughter, Iphigenia. Orestes, their son, is ordered by the oracle of Apollo to avenge his father. This he obeys by murdering his own mother. The Furies of his mother claim blood for blood. Orestes takes refuge at the sanctuary of Athene. The Goddess institutes a court of deities to judge the case. The votes are equally divided, but Athene gives her casting vote to Orestes. So Orestes is acquitted. The Furies are appeased by a promise of ever-lasting honours at Athens. In Hegel's view, here we have again a conflict of two equally justifiable but one-sided ethical forces, the sacred bond between father and son as represented by Orestes and the sacred bond between mother and son as identified with the Furies. But the dénouement does not coincide either with the death of Orestes or with the disgrace of the Furies. The catastrophe is avoided by a reconciliation. In this case reconciliation is obtained through an external force. But it may also be obtained by an internal change in the soul of the hero. The «Oedipus at Colonus» for example, ends in what Hegel has called «a subjective internal reconciliation» when the hero abandons his claim and purifies himself by his own self-condemnation.

Whether the conflict results in a catastrophe or in a reconciliation, the moral significance is the same: both the conflicting forces are abrogated and harmony is restored. The Idea in animat-

ing the individual wills and purposes of the tragic personages, has passed out of the repose of its universality into the sphere of particularity and so causes an internal conflict; i.e. identity has issued in opposites. But it cannot remain for ever in the state of conflict. By nullifying the one-sided claims of its particular powers, it avoids the contradiction and resumes its original balance and repose, i.e. opposites return again to identity. That which is crushed in the tragic issue is not the ethical principle itself, — for instance, in the case of Antigone, family duty and state authority remain just as good as before, — but merely its false and one-sided particularity. Tragedy, Hegel thinks, is not a work of Fate, it is the manifestation of «Eternal Justice». By «Eternal Justice» Hegel does not mean however the ordinary Divine Judgment in the sense of a super-human power which rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked. He speaks explicitly against the idea of «Poetic Justice» in the dénouement of tragedy. «Eternal Justice» is the reassertion of universal harmony against individual collisions, or the sacrifice of the parts for the welfare of the whole. It is affirmation through negation. In this sense good itself may be wrong, when it is one-sided and negates other forces equally good; wrong itself may also be good, when it is a necessary means towards a higher end; for instance, a tragic catastrophe leads to the restoration of harmony.

The pleasure we take in Tragedy is now easy to explain: it is due to the visualization of the triumph of «Eternal Justice». In the above summary we have distinguished a catastrophe from a reconciliation. For Hegel however such a distinction is really of no vital importance. From his standpoint even a catastrophe may be regarded as a reconciliation, as it vindicates «Eternal Justice». It is the feeling of reconciliation in this wider sense that is the source of tragic pleasure. In this connection Hegel reads a new meaning into the Aristotelian phrase «pity and fear». These are not the ordinary vulgar emotions that go by the same names. For fear is felt, not for simple misfortunes and sufferings,

but before the eternal and inviolable power, i.e. the Idea, which crushes man if he turns against it and disturbs its harmony and repose. Pity, too, is not a sympathy for the misfortunes of another. «This ordinary sensibility», says Hegel, «a sympathy with the misfortunes and sufferings of another, your country cousins are ready enough with compassions of this order. The man of nobility and greatness has no wish to be smothered with this sort of pity». True pity is a sympathy for the moral character of the sufferer, it is not felt for the personages as ordinary individuals, but as incarnations of ethical forces. But Hegel does not seem to regard pity and fear as the only agents of tragic effect; they produce the tragic effect so far as they contribute to the feeling of reconciliation. «Above pity and fear», he says, «there soars a feeling of harmony» which tragedy gives by revealing «Eternal Justice», which, in its absolute domination, breaks the justice of exclusive ends and passions and triumphantly maintains its peace and repose (1).

II.

Such is in brief outline Hegel's theory of Tragedy. Let us now examine it and see how for it can be regarded as true of our actual concrete experience and how far it is sound theoretically. In our opinion, Hegel's rationalistic interpretation of Tragedy is unsatisfactory in several ways.

In the first place, as we have observed in the opening Chapter, Hegel, like most philosophers who have dealt with Tragedy, adopts a vicious method, that of deducing a theory of Tragedy à Priori from a pre-conceived metaphysical system instead of basing it on a careful analysis of both ancient and modern masterpieces of Tragedy. His theory of Tragedy is but a small item in his much vaster doctrine of the absolute. «The almost impenetrable profundity of the latter», says Prof. M. Dixon, «becomes the august protection of the former» (2). But the way in which he so neatly

explains the universe, including Tragedy, by his dialectic method has something artificial and mechanical in it that makes the plain man, if not reject, at least suspect his views. Is the universe really constituted by a progressive evolution of the Hegelian «triads», thesis, antithesis, synthesis; synthesis as a new thesis, higher antithesis, higher synthesis and so on to the absolute? Let common sense humbly give way to high metaphysics, that is not our concern. But when Hegel talks about Tragedy from which the plain man may receive the highest degree of pleasure as well as the philosopher, we have at least the right to compare his findings with our own emotional experiences. The weakness in Hegel's theory lies in that it pre-supposes a highly developed humanity. He has in mind an audience imbued with something of his own lofty idealism, an audience which could not be found either in ancient Greece or in modern Europe. Most of us plain men who may never have heard of, or understood, Hegel's «Eternal Justice» can still enjoy the works of Sophocles or Shakespeare. For an amateur, tragic pleasure is generally immediate, it takes him by surprise and does not result from an intellectual realization of moral significance. When he does set himself to reflect on the moral significance of a tragedy, he often does so cold-heartedly without experiencing in the least the true tragic pleasure. Hegel confuses the aesthetic attitude with the critical attitude which we have distinguished in Chapter II.

Hegel's theory is based almost wholly on Greek tragedy. He draws some interesting distinctions between ancient and modern tragedies. The essential feature of modern tragedy he finds in its increased subjectivity. The ancient tragic hero identifies himself with some ethical force which is both universal and rational, but the modern tragic hero rests more on his personal aims, ambitions and passions. So the conflict of eternal ethical forces, Hegel confesses, is obscured in modern tragedy; and the catastrophe is often not so much a restoration of universal harmony as a just distribution of reward and punishment. In spite of this

concession, Hegel makes desperate efforts to show that even in modern tragedy the hero is still an embodiment of some ethical principle and the catastrophe is still, though in a less extent, a triumph of «Eternal Justice». But bearing Hegel's contention in mind, let us study Shakespeare's «King Lear», Racine's »Britannicus» and Goethes «Faust», all acknowledged crowning achievements of modern genius. What ethical force could Regan and Goneril, Nero, or Mephistopheles possibly stand for? Or how could we possibly regard the claim of Cordelia, Britannicus and Gretchen as one-sided, exclusive and therefore wrong? Could not «Eternal Justice» permit Cordelia to servive her sisters, or is it violated if Faust were never tempted by Mephistopheles?

Even Greek Tragedy does not bear out Hegel's contention. Let us confine ourselves again to his own favourite example, the «Antigone». «In the view of Eternal Justice», says Hegel, «both Creon ant Antigone were wrong because they were one-sided, but at the same time both were right». Goethe, as we may gather from his conversation with Eckermann, laughed at the idea. In denying a burial to Polyneices, Goethe points out, Creon does not only violate the sanctity of family bond and the honour due to the dead, he commits also a crime against the state by leaving the corpse to infest the air and pollute the altars of the Gods. In literary matters Goethe has at least as great a claim to our attention as Hegel. Indeed the situation of Creon can hardly be compared with that of Antigone. Creon could very well maintain the authority of the state without prohibiting the burial of Polyneices who was already punished in incurring defeat and death. Antigone, on the other hand, had no other alternative than to disobey Creon if she meant to perform her family duty. Many other women in a similar situation would have followed the example of Ismene, Antigone's sister, by showing obedience to the state and so avoiding the conflict. That would be what Hegel has called a «subjective internal reconciliation», would he call it a triumph of «Eternal Justice» too? Hegel perhaps forgets also that in this play,

a subjective internal reconciliation did take place, for Creon, warned by a prophet, did reverse his edict and pardon Antigone, but that did not prevent the calamity. Is it in Hegel's view that «Eternal Justice» is better revealed in destruction than in reconciliation? Moreover, there are other personages in the play whom Hegel seems to have taken no account of. The poor queen and son of Creon are doomed to death by Eternal Justice for no other reason than being the queen and son of Creon (3).

To the plain man, what Tragedy represents is primarily the suffering of the hero or the heroine. After reading or seeing the tragedy of «Oedipus», for example, what remains vividly in his impression is not the quarrel between Oedipus and Tiresias or that between Oedipus and Creon, — besides these two incidents, there is nothing in the action which could possibly be called a conflict in the Hegelian sense — but the recognition of his crimes, the death of Jocasta and the self-blinding and banishment of Oedipus himself. All these latter incidents are generally called «calamities» or «catastrophes». They constitute the «suffering» of the traigic personages. What usually gives the plain man an intense pleasure is mainly the «suffering» side of tragedy. By laying an one-sided emphasis on conflict and reconciliation, Hegel ignores this important factor of Tragedy altogether. We might naturally expect such a regrettable negligence from a philosopher who tries to explain away the existence of evils by the doctrine of affirmation through negation. But in doing so, he leaves aside both the cause of suffering and the way in which suffering is borne by tragic personages — both these defects would be fatal to any theory of tragedy.

Take the cause of suffering first. Hegel's notion of «Eternal Justice», even if it could explain the solution of tragic conflict, can by no means explain the origin of it. Both Creon and Antigone may be regarded as being doomed by the one-sidedness of their claims, but why should they find themselves in an awkward situation in which they had no other alternative than to stick to their

one-sided claims and so to become victims of terrible misfortunes? Why in a perfect harmonious universe as Hegel has conceived it, there should be so much waste, and justice should be bought at so high a price? The primitive men and the tragic poets often attribute unintelligible and unavoidable misfortunes and evils to he work of fate. Hegel refuses to recognize the rôle of Fate in Tragedy and the question remains unsolved. He is however inconsistent in this point. He confesses that in modern tragedy, «Romeo and Juliet» for example, the catastrophe is due not so much to any kind of Justice as to chance, unhappy accidents and outward circumstances over which the tragic personages have no control. He does not seem to be alive to the fact that even in Greek Tragedy such unhappy accidents often play also an important part. The action of «Oedipus» evolves out of a series of such unhappy accidents. As we shall explain more fully later on, Hegel's own favourite tragedy, «Antigone», is not exempted from them. Hegel gives no explanation for the fact that such unhappy accidents should take place at all in a world where everything is necessary as everything is determined by «Eternal Justice».

Ignoring suffering in Tragedy altogether, Hegel naturally does not say anything about the way in which suffering is borne. Prof. Bradley has remarked very justly: «Physical pain.... is one thing, Philoctetus bearing it is another. And the noble endurance of pain that rends the heart is the source of much that is best worth having in tragedy». Tragedy ,as we have observed elsewhere, reveals to us human worth in that the tragic hero maintains his vitality and dignity even when he is crushed by a terrible misfortune. This sense of human dignity and vitality certainly contributes much to the tragic pleasure. Hegel, in ignoring this factor, misses an essential feature of Tragedy.

We have described Hegel's theory as «optimistic», for he himself obviously intends it to be so. But when we reflect on the matter more attentively, we shall find that his doctrine of conflict and reconciliation has enough in it to cause dismay and despair

Hegel always takes pains to make it clear that the Absolute is a «concrete Universal», and should never be detached from the sensuous world as the Platonic «Idea» is. What his theory of Tragedy implies, however, is really that concrete individual human happiness should be sacrificed for the sake of an abstract «Eternal Justice». The ethical forces, in so far as they are isolated, in so far as they are no longer the one all-embracing Idea, are naturally one-sided and exclusive, and consequently they often come into conflict with one another. If the personages who embody these ethical forces should be destroyed whenever there is a conflict, as Agamemnon, Oedipus, Lear and many other tragic heroes have been, then the road to virtue and righteousness is a sure road to death and destruction. If all this is done, as Hegel assures us, in the name of «Eternal Justice», then we may well ask: Who is to profit by such an «Eternal Justice»? Hegel's theory really means that in this finite world of ours, perpetual conflict leads to perpetual destruction. The «Eternal Justice» which he is so eager to vindicate, is at bottom, to adopt one of his own jargons, an empty «Nothing» which owes its existence to the destruction of «Being». Is not such a view of Tragedy «pessimistic» in the highest degree?

III.

Hegel found an able and enthusiastic exponent of his theory in an eminent Oxford professor, A. C. Bradley. It is mainly due to his lucid exposition that the Hegelian theory of Tragedy has become familiar to the English reading public. As his vantage ground lies in Shakespearean tragedy, and as the Hegelian formula applies but imperfectly to modern works, Prof. Bradley has proposed a restatement of the theory of conflict and reconciliation so as to make it applicable to modern tragedy as well (4). One might say that it is this restated Hegelian theory which serves as the philosophical basis of his great book on «Shakespearean Tragedy» (5). His works have passed so far unchallenged. But as Shake-

speare is acknowledged as the greatest representative of modern tragedy and as Prof Bradley's book makes the most serious attempt to apply the Hegelian doctrine to the study of Shakespeare, it offers us a rare occasion to test the validity of the theory of conflict and reconciliation as it is applied to modern masterpieces.

To take the notion of conflict first, Prof. Bradley's restatement runs as follows:

«If we omit all reference to ethical or substantial powers and interests, ...we have the more general idea ....that tragedy portrays a self-division and self-waste of spirit, or a division of spirit involving conflict and waste. It is implied in this that on both sides in the conflct there is a spiritual value. The same idea may be expressed ....by saying that the tragic conflict is one not merely of good with evil ,but also more essentially, of good with good» (6).

By «good» he does not mean exclusively «moral good», it is an equivalent word for «spiritual value». Whether Prof. Bradley has omitted all reference to ethical powers as he professes, or how much he has retained of the essence of the Hegelian theory, we shall leave to students of philosophy to determine; both points seem to be questionable. Let us examine the statement as it stands and as it is applied to particular works. Two principal merits of the restated theory may be pointed out at once. First it introduces the notion of waste which may include the notion of suffering, unduly neglected by Hegel. Secondly, the general term «division of spirit »may comprise both the outward conflict of universal ethical forces, which alone is emphasized by Hegel, and the inward struggle of personal passions and purposes which is more frequent in modern tragedy and which the Hegelian formula does not include.

But in spite of these merits, Prof. Bradley, both in his restatement and in his application of it, is often confused and even inconsistent. His principal example is «Macbeth». He confesses that the conflict here does not lie between two ethical forces as the main

interest is in personalities, but between Macbeth and the persons opposing him. He then goes on to show that there is some «good» or «spiritual value» on Macbeth's side of the conflict, and he cites as instances Macbeth's vivid imagination, great courage, strong will and bravery and skill in war. «Are not these things», he asks, in themselves good, and gloriously good? Do they not make you, for all your horrors, admire Macbeth, sympathize with his agony, pity him and see in him the waste of forces on which you place a spiritual value?» (7). We have no hesitation to answer in the affirmative. But the real question does not lie here; it lies in whether in the Tragedy of «Macbeth» such «good» or «spiritual value» constitutes one of the conflicting forces. It would only be a gross misinterpretation of the play to say that the conflict here lies between the courage, skill and imagination of Macbeth on the one hand and the loyalty and patriotism of Duncan's followers on the other. As most people agree, the force that animates Macbeth is his treacherous ambition to usurp the throne. Macbeth's courage, skill and imagination may have contributed to the success and defeat of his ambition, but they are not in themselves the principal force of the conflict. The word «good» or «spiritual value» can by no means be applied to his treacherous intention, however you may stretch its sense. In his «Shakespearean Tragedy», Prof. Bradley contradicts himself. There he says explicitly: «Treasonous ambition in Macbeth collides with loyalty and patriotism in Macduff and Malcolm: here is the outward conflict. But these powers or principles equally collide in the soul of Macbeth himself: here is the inner» (8). Elsewhere in the same book he says: «In Shakespearean Tragedy the main source of the convulsion which produces suffering and death is never good». It is «in every case evil» (9). If we place his various utterings together, their inconsistency will be seen at once. In his «Oxford Lectures» he denies that the conflict in Macbeth lies between two ethical forces; in his «Shakespearean Tragedy», he affirms that it does. In his «Oxford Lectures», he says that the tragic conflict is «es-

sentially of good with good»; in his «Shakesperean Tragedy», he says emphatically that the «main source» of tragic conflict is «in every case evil». Prof. Bradley seems never to be sure of his own ground, he hesitates and he falters all the while; though he is often so eloquent in his plea that one is carried away with him and fails to notice his contradictions.

The fact is that in Prof. Bradley there is often a «tragic conflict» between a fine poetic sensibility and the shackle of Hegelian metaphysics. Such a conflict is especially intense in his treatment of Fate. About the main source of tragic conflict there are two opposing theories. The popular view is that the ultimate force which determines tragic actions is both unintelligible and irresistible and that it is this unintellegible and irresistible force which gives the impression of Fate in Tragedy. The Hegelian theory denies this and affirms on the contrary that tragic conflict arises from the collision of two equally justifiable but one-sided ethical forces, and that it ends in the triumph of «Eternal Justice». Now the idea of Justice, whether it is taken in its usual sense or in the Hegelian sense, is diametrically opposite to that of Fate; as the idea of Justice places the responsibility of the catastrophe on man whereas the idea of Fate takes it away from him; the idea of Justice insists on the explicability of tragic catastrophe, whereas the idea of Fate acknowledges the existence of mystery. The question is: Does Prof. Bradley believe in the one or in the other? It is Justice or Fate which Prof. Bradley regards as the ultimate force of Tragedy?

To this question Prof. Bradley answers: it is both Justice and Fate at once. Set in this crude form, the idea seems to be strange. But it does not seem strange as Prof. Bradley presents it. He discusses first the idea of Fate and then the idea of Justice, and shows that both these ideas are inadequate to account for the tragic conflict. Tragedy, he argues, must possess two essential features: On the one hand, it should not leave us «crushed, rebellious, or desperate», on the other, it should «remain to us some-

thing piteous, fearful and mysterious.» If a tragedy relies exclusively on Fate, the spectacle would leave us depressed and desperate ;on the other hand, if it rests exclusively on Justice, «the spectacle of suffering and waste could not seem to us so fearful and mysterious as it does». So Prof. Bradley comes to a compromise in which the opposites, Justice and Fate, are identified. «Thus we are left at last», he concludes, «with an idea showing two sides or aspects which we can neither separate nor reconcile. The whole order against which the individual part shows itself powerless seems to be animated by a passion for perfection: we cannot otherwise explain its behaviour towards evil. Yet it appears to engender this evil within itself, and in its effort to overcome and expell it, it is agonized with pain, and driven to mutilate its own substance and to lose not only evil but priceless good». Again, «we remain confronted with the inexplicable fact, or the no less inexplicable appearance of a world travailing for perfection, but bringing to birth, together with glorious good, an evil which it is able to overcome only by self-torture and self-waste. And this fact or appearance is Tragedy». You may object to this idea as giving no solution of the riddle of life. But Prof. Bradley replies: «Tragedy would not be tragedy if it were not a painful mystery» (10).

All this is splendidly said, and no objection can be raised against it. But in admitting Tragedy as a «painful mystery», in confessing the inexplicability of a world which is apparently governed by a moral law and which yet engenders evil to cause its own torture and waste, Prof. Bradley is really retreating from the Hegelian ground that the world can be rationalistically or morally explained and justified. What he has called an inexplicable «painful mystery» is an x for which Hegel would substitute «Eternal Justice», and it is just what is meant by Fate in the ordinary language. Prof. Bradley elsewhere describes Hegel's «whole account of the ultimate power in Tragedy» as «a rationalization of the idea of Fate». But by a strange irony, the latter epithet applies to his own doctrine even much more aptly than to Hegel's.

Prof. Bradley distinguishes two kinds of Fate: one is «a mythological expression for the whole system or order, of which the individual characters form an inconsiderable and feeble part; which seems to determine . . . .their action, which is so vast and complex that they can scarcely at all understand it or control its workings»; the other is «a blank necessity, totally regardless alike of human weal and of the difference between good and evil or right and wrong» (11). In his view, «tragedies which represent man as the mere plaything of chance or a blank fate or a malicious fate, are never really deep» (12), and in Shakespeare there is «no trace of fatalism in its more primitive crude and obvious forms» (13). The distinction which he has thus made seems plausible to the first sight. But when you think about it more carefully, it really does not exist. For the essential features of Fate are unintelligibility and irresistibility. A system or order which man can neither understand nor control is at bottom a «blank necessity». To illustrate by a concrete example, let us examine again the tragedy of «Antigone». When the prophet Teiresias warned Creon that his cruel deed would bring calamity to his own house, the King repented and gave order that Antigone should be pardoned and saved. But the order reached Antigone only when she had already been dead. Why should Antigone have died only a moment too soon or why should the pardon have reached her only a moment too late? Even Prof. Bradley himself admits that it cannot be attributed to the characterestics of Creon and Antigone and that such unhappy accident gives us the impression of fate (14). The question is: How far does such an unhappy accident contribute to the catastrophe of the action? A critic with Hegelian prejudices is likely to underestimate its importance. But suppose that it had happened otherwise and Creon's pardon did arrive in time to save Antigone, would there still be a tragedy? Certainly not, for the play would then end satisfactorily to every body, Antigone would have her duty performed and be married to Haemon and Creon would remain the head of a prosperous family. The tragedy of

«Antigone», we may say, hinges just on an accident — an accident trivial in appearance but fatal in consequence. Under which category, then, would Prof. Bradley put such unhappy accident: A «blank necessity», or an unintelligible and uncontrollable order or system? The question seems almost meaningless, as the two alternatives are no alternatives at all. The unhappy accident in «Antigone» answers equally well to Prof. Bradley's descriptions of the two different kinds of Fate. Let it not be supposed that in Shakespeare there is no trace of similar form of fatalism. The fate of Antigone has its exact parallel in that of Cordelia: in her case too, the message to save her arrived only a moment too late. It is interesting to know why Prof. Bradley should have distinguished two kinds of fate. He wants to introduce into what he regards as the higher form of fate the idea of justice, so he calls it «order» or «system», ignoring, however, that the two ideas are really incompatible.

IV.

As in the case of conflict, so in that of reconciliation, Prof. Bradly, intending to strengthen the Hegelian position by remoulding it, abandons it altogether. For Hegel, we remember, reconciliation consists in the defeat of both conflicting forces, which he takes to be the triumph of «Eternal Justice». Prof. Bradley, in his restatement, shows again a good deal of hesitation and inconsistency. In the «Oxford Lectures» he says on page 90, «As the tragic action portrays a self-division or intestinal conflict of spirit, so the catastrophe displays the violent annulling of this division or conflict». This might seem to conform entirely with the Hegelian idea but it really differs from it. He has left out all reference to «Eternal Justice», the key-stone of the Hegelian theory. For Hegel, reconciliation means affirmation through negation; for Bradley, it is negation without affirmation. It only does

violence to language to call «violent annulling of division» by the name of «Reconciliation».

But on page 84 in the same lecture, he gives another meaning to the word «Reconciliation». There he says: «In the conclusion of not a few tragedies, pain is mingled not merely with acquiescence, but with something like exultation. Is there not such a feeling at the close of «Hamlet», «Othello» and «King Lear»; and that although the end in the last two cases touches the limit of legitimate pathos? This exultation appears to be connected with our sense that the hero has never shown himself so great or noble as in the death which seals his failure.

A rush of passionate admiration, and a glory in the greatness of the soul, mingle with our grief». So it is neither the mere nullification of conflict, nor the distribution of just reward and punishment, but the greatness and nobility with which the hero faces his calamity, that gives the feeling of reconciliation. In his «Shakespearean Tragedy» the same idea of exultation over greatness of soul occurs again and again (15).

But this is not all. Elsewhere Prof. Bradley seems to think that moral justice may also have something to do with reconciliation. For example, at the end of «Hamlet», Horatio speaks after the death of the Prince:

> Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

Shakespeare, against his custom, introduces here a reference to another life. In Bradley's view, this is a sort of compensation to Hamlet, for «Hamlet is the only one of this tragic heroes whom he has not allowed us to see in the days when this life smiled on him» (16). Hence our feeling of reconciliation comes from the thought that Hamlet, though unhappy in this life, may enjoy a happier lot in a future world. As our natural feelings generally side with goodness, so we sometimes feel a moral indignation against the villains in a tragedy, and it lightens our heart when some character in the play expresses such feeling in words. Prof.

Bradley regards this as another instance of reconciliation, and he gives Emilia in «Othello» as example. «She is the only person who utters for us the violent common emotions which we feel», once in her curse on Iago:

A halter pardon him, and Hell gnaw his bones.

and again in her outburst against the brutality of Othello:

She was too fond of her most filthy bargain,

such utterings, says Bradley, «lift the overwhelming weight of calamity that oppresses us» and «bring us the relief of joy and admiration» (17).

Some commentators of Shakespeare, perhaps writing under the influence of Prof. Bradley, have pointed out another kind of reconciliation. In the end of most Shakespearean tragedies, it is said, order emerges out of chaos and stillness comes after thunder peal. Thus Fortinbras restores order after the death of Hamlet, Cassio replaces Othello as the ruler of Cyprus, the scepter of Macbeth passes into the strong grasp of young Malcohn, Kent and Edgar assume power after the fall of King Lear. They all «end on the notes of duty and optimism: that the world's work must go forward, and that there are men to do it» (18). We do not know what Prof. Bradley would say of this view, but it seems to be in keeping with the general spirit of his teaching. He himself once wrote: «The 'Agamemnon' and 'Prometheus', if wrongly taken as wholes, would be . . . . bad tragedies» (19). He has in mind of course the fact that each of these tragedies forms the first part of a Trilogy which ends in a restoration of order and justice.

All these different ways of reconciliation may be present in most tragedies and they may contribute more or less to the final impression, which, in tragedies of high order, is seldom depressed and gloomy. Prof. Bradley has certainly done a great service to the study of Tragedy in emphasizing it throughout his book on Shakespeaare. Some of the passages on reconciliation are the finest things that he has ever written. On the whole he seems to regard the greatness and nobility of soul in presence of misfortune and

calamity as the principal agent of reconciliation, «the impression that the heroic being, though in one sense and outwardly he has failed; is, in yet in another sense superior to the world in which he appears; is, in some way.... untouched by the doom that overtakes him, and is rather set free from life than deprived of it» (20). To this description we readily agree, and in Chapter XI, we shall have occasion to discuss this point again in connection with the feeling of vitality in Tragedy. But it should be pointed out that Prof. Bradley reads into the word «reconciliation» a sense which is totally un-Hegelian, as it is not the vindication of Eternal Justice, but the triumph of individual will, i.e. the expression of «Subjectivity» and «one-sidedness» which Hegel so much disliked.

Let us now sum up. According to Hegel, Tragedy arises from the conflict of two equally justifiable but one-sided ethical forces, and it ends in a restoration of harmony after the nullification of these conflicting forces. This Hegel designates as a «reconciliation »through the intervention of Eternal Justice. We have shown that this rationalistic thory of tragedy is defective in several ways:

(1) It is deduced a priori and untrue of our emotional experience;
(2) It is based on a misinterpretation of Greek tragedy;
(3) It cannot be applied to modern tragedy;
(4) It neglects suffering in Tagedy and shows inconsistency with regard to the problem of Fate;
(5) It is at bottom pessimistic, as it implies that perpetual conflict leads to perpetual destruction.

Aware of some of these defects, Prof. Bradley has proposed a restatement of the Hegelian theory. We have shown that, instead of strengthening the Hegelian position, he abandons it altogether. His view on tragic conflict is especially unsatisfactory, as he intends to make a compromise between the idea of Justice and that of Fate which are really incompatible. His argument really leads, against his own intention, to the conclusion that it is Fate rather

than Justice which ultimately determines both tragic conflict and tragic catastrophe. His view of the feeling of reconciliation we have found to be essentially correct, the view that the nobility of soul in presence of death and misfortune prevents us from being left in utter depression and horror. But this, again, is not what Hegel has meant by reconciliation.

CHAPTER VIII.

PESSIMISTIC INTERPRETATION OF TRAGEDY SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE.

I.

The philosophers are generally ill at ease among the tragic poets. To go to them for some light on the problem of Tragedy, one is often more left in the dark than ever. No sooner has one turned the back from the door of one philosopher than one is told an entirely different story by another. We have heard Hegel, we are now to hear his antagonists, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

As in the case of Hegel, Schopenhauer's theory of Tragedy cannot be fully unterstood without some knowledge of the major premises from which it is deduced. Both Hegel and Schopenhauer attempt to overcome the impasse left by Kant between the phenomenal and the nomenal world. The Kantian idealism is at bottom a self-contradiciton. On the one hand, «this our world which is so real, with all its suns and milky ways, is neverthreless but idea»; on the other hand, Kant recognizes some ultimate reality, the «thing-in-itself», as the cause of our perception and therefore the

source of idea. He regards this as unknowable and yet he knows that it exists. Hegel, to avoid such an obvious contradiction, denies the exitsence of «the-thing-in-itself». The ideal is the real, and everything in the world is rationalistically explicable and justifiable, so is tragedy. Schopenhauer finds, however, a different solution. He identifies Will with the Kantian «thing-in-itself» and thus reduces the world to two ultimate factors: Will and Idea. Will consists of instinct, impulse, desire and emotion. In such expériences the subject who knows and the object which is known are one. It is through the immediate knowledge of our own will that we come to know reality. The Cartesian formula: «I think, therefore I am», is turned into «I will, therefore I am». Will, in becoming the object of knowledge, becomes Idea. So Idea is only «the objectification of will», or the image of striving, desire and other vital forces as reflected in the mirror of consciousnness. Will is thus the ultimate reality and Idea is only appearance.

From this account of the primacy of Will, one might expect that Schopenhauer is glorifying Will at the expense of Idea. But there is nothing farther from the truth. All Schopenhauer's teaching, on the contrary, centers around the notion of renouncing Will for the realization of pure Idea. He has two main reasons against Will.

His first reason is ontological. Will is blind and self-centered. Though it is the vital force permeating the whole universe, it is, from the necessity of its inherent nature, attached to individuals, and follows the principle of Individuation or sufficient Reason. It is the veil of Mâyâ which hides from man the image of Pure Idea, as Idea is timeless, spaceless and independent of the Principle of sufficient Reason. «The knowing individual as such, and the particular things known by him», says Schopenhauer, «are always in some space, at some time, and are links in the chain of causes and effects». Only through these connections in time, space and causality «is the object interesting to the individual, i.e. related to the Will» (1). The ordinary knowledge, in other words, is only

the slave of Will and confines itself only to particular things. One has to be above the principle of Individuation, i.e. free from the domination of Will, in order to pierce through the veil of Mâyâ and have a clear glance into the realm of Pure Ideas.

His second reason is psychological and ethical. «All willing arises from want, therefore from deficiency, and therefore from suffering. ....No attained object of desire can give lasting satisfaction, but merely a fleeting gratification; it is like the alms thrown to the beggar, that keeps him alive to-day that his misery may be prolonged till the morrow. Therefore, so long as our consciousness is filled by our will, ...we can never have lasting happiness nor peace» (2).

Here we have the root of Schopenhauer's pessimism. The world thus conceived becomes an inferno; and pleasure, no longer a positive good, is only the short interval between eternal pains, and, by contrast, makes pains all the more unbearable. Is there no way out of the trouble? For Schopenhauer, the disciple of Buddha, the answer is obvious. As pain arises from Will, so salvation lies in the denial of Will.

To deny the Will-to-live while you are actually living, is not that a contradiction and even an impossibility? Schopenhauer does not think so. He gives aesthetic contemplation of art and nature as a typical example of the blessed state in which the subject is lifted for a moment above all wishes and cares, and is unshackled by the principle of Sufficient Reason. The subject loses himself in the aesthetic object, the distinction between the perceiver and the perceived vanishes, and the suject — object as identified becomes one self — sufficient world, cut off from all relations to everything outside itself. In such an aesthetic trance, the subject is no longer individual, but «a pure, will-less, painless, time-less subject of knowledge», and the object is no longer a particular thing, but the Idea, or Eternal Form (3). The cessation of Will brings with it not only the intuition of Idea but the enjoyment of the beautiful. «He now looks back smiling and at rest on the de-

lusions of this world, which once were able to move and agonize his spirit also, but which now stand before him as utterly indifferent to him, as the chess-men when the game is ended». «Life and its forms now pass before him as a fleeting illusion, as a light morning dream before half-waking eyes, the real world already shining through it so that it no longer can deceive; and like this morning dream, they finally vanish altogether without any violent transition» (4).

Art in general, then, sets us free from the Will-to-live, and gives us a momentary happiness which is otherwise unattainable in this world .Tragedy in particular is the best means to achieve this end, as it brings home to us more vividly than anything else the darkest side of life, the triumph of the wicked, the defeat of the innocent, the cruelty of chance and Fate and the prevalence of evils and misfortunes. The motive power of Tragedy, as of life, is Will. The will of one individual comes into conflict with the will of other individuals, and in the end they are both destroyed. The cause of tragic catastrophes cannot be sought in Justice, «for in what has Orphelia, Desdemona or Cordelia offended?» The tragic hero or heroine is punished, not for any individual sins, but for «the original sin, i.e. the crime of existence itself». Schopenhauer quotes again and again the lines of Calderon with approval:

For the greatest crime of man
Is that he was born.

Tragedy, as it reveals this great truth to man, is justly recognized as «the summit of poetic art».

Hegel, we remember, says very little about suffering in Tragedy. Schopenhauer, however, makes it an all-important factor. «The representation of a great misfortune», he says, «is alone essential to Tragedy». He distinguishes three different ways in which misfortune may come about. First, it may issue from «a character of extraordinary wickedness», e.g. Richard III, Iago, Franz Moor, Phaedra of Euripides, Creon in the «Antigone». Secondly it may be the work of blind Fate, which Schopenhauer identifies with

«Chance and error», e.g. «Oedipus Rex» and Greek tragedies in general, «Romeo and Juliet», «Tancred», «the Bride of Messina». Lastly, it may happen through «the mere position of the dramatis personae with regard to each other» so that out of the ordinary circumstances of life, without any marked wickedness in the character or any error or accident, there may arise a situation in which characters of ordinary morality may be compelled «knowingly and with their eyes open, to do each other the greatest injury, without any one of them being entirely in the wrong». Schopenhauer regards this last type of Tragedy as the best and the most terrible, for wicked character and unhappy accident accur but rarely, whereas «in the last type of tragedy we see that those powers which destroy happiness and life are such that their path to us also is open at every moment». But examples of this class are rare. «Hamlet» in so far as the relation of Hamlet to Laertes and Orphelia is concerned, «Faust» in so far as the events connected with Gretchen and her brother constitute the principle action.

If Tragedy is essentially a representation of suffering, why does it give us pleasure? The answer follows from Schopenhauer's general philosophy. «What gives to all Tragedy that singular swing towards elevation», he says, «is the awakening of the knowledge that the world, that life, cannot satisfy us thoroughly, and consequently is not worthy of our attachment. In this consists the tragic spirit: it therefore leads to resignation». «Thus we see in tragedies the noblest men, after long conflict and suffering, at last renounce the ends they have so keely followed, and all the pleasures of life forever, or else freely and joyfully surrender life itself» (5). We, the spectators of that conflict and that surrender, learn from them a noble lesson and are likewise set free for a moment from the Will-to-ive. Tragic pleasure, like pleasure in general, comes from the momentary cessation of pain. «The bliss which cradles us», to use the words of Mr. Carritt, «in its divinely tranquil arms is the bliss not of passion but of a lifted yoke and riven fetters» (6).

Schopenhauer accepts the Aristotelian definition that Tragedy awakens pity and fear, but he interprets the meaning of these words more or less as Lessing did. Fear is egoistic. We feel at first threatened by the misfortunes of the hero and we make with him a common cause against life. Then gradually we partake of his suffering and forget our egoistic motive .Thus fear gives birth to pity. Schopenhauer blames Aristotle for having regarded pity as an end in itself. For the tragic poets, pity is only a means towards the denial of the Will-to-live. In saying this, Schopenhauer does not, however, undervalue the importance of pity. On the contrary, he regards pity as the foundation of all morality; and, judging from his writings, we may also say, as the foundation of all aesthetic; for it is the starting point of contemplation as well as of love. It is «the sixth sense» which reveals to man the invisible». By pity alone man transcends the individual Will and knows intuitively the universal suffering through the suffering of the tragic hero. In contemplating a tragedy, we are constantly applying the formula: «Ttat twan asi» («Thus thou art»). The tragic hero is purified from the Will-to-live through actual personal suffering; and we, the spectators of his tragedy, are also so purified through partaking of his sufferings in pity. We feel with the «Bride of Messina»: «Das Leben ist der Güter höchstes nicht», and we renounce cheerfully with her the insatiable desire and the unprofitable struggling (7).

II.

Schopenhauer comes perhaps nearer to truth than Hegel. For one thing he has the advantage over most philosophers: his sincerity, his fine taste and judgment in art and literature, and above all, his lucid and vivid writing unburdened with abstract philosophical terms and accompanied with copious examples, all these inspire confidence in popular readers. He has made at least two important contributions towards our knowledge of tragedy. First,

he brings home to us more vividly than any other writer the pessimistic side of Tragedy. Whether pessimism is the only thing we find in Tragedy is a question which we shall discuss in the conclusion of the present chapter, but it is certainly present in most great tragedies. By emphasizing suffering in Tragedy, Schopenhauer has filled the gap left by Hegel. Schopenhauer, more than any previous writer on Tragedy, makes it clear to us that the enjoyment of Tragedy is primarily an aesthetic experience independent of any personal reference. He rightly repudiates the notion of «poetic justice» and identifies pity with aesthetic sympathy or intuitive knowing.

But a temporary dormancy of practical interests in the aesthetic experience does not necessarily imply a conscious denial of the Will-to-live. Schopenhauer's idea of «resignation» is neither in keeping with his general aesthetical views nor warranted by actual facts.

Take his general aesthetical views first. Broadly speaking, he follows Kant in regarding aesthetic activity as «disinterested contemplation». It is characterized by the absence of desire and conceptual thinking. The aesthetic subject «ceases to consider the where, the when, the why and the whither of things, and looks simply and solely at the *what*». He «loses» himself in the object and perceives the world only as Idea. As an abstract analysis of the aesthetic experience, we take this account to be essentially correct. But in speaking of tragedy ,Schopenhauer says that it teaches us the worthlessness of life and the wisdom of renouncing Will. How could we come to know the worthlessness of life, we ask, if we do not consider the «why» and «whither» of things, if we refrain from conceptual thinking? Moreover, Will expresses itself in negation as well as in affirmation. To renounce the Will-to-live is after all a volitional act. Will cannot be got rid of even in the very act of getting rid of it. But the greatest difficulty of all is that Schopenhauer's doctrine of Idea as the objectification of will implies the inseparable connection between Idea and Will. Idea

cannot exist without Will as phenomenon cannot exist without reality. Schopenhauer teaches the denial of Will for the contemplation of Idea. Does it not amount to saying that an image in a mirror can remain after the destruction of the mirror or after the disappearance of the object which has caused the image?

From the theoretical point of view, the notion of renunciation is logically contradictory and psychologically false: logically-contradictory, because it regards Will as the ultimate reality and yet supposes that appearance could exist without that reality, and because it negates life and yet tries to make life enjoyable; psychologically false, because it implies that will could be denied without the intervention of will ,and because it supposes that life, which consists essentially of volitional and emotional activities, could go on without will at all. From the general tendency of Schopenhauer's philosophy, we might expect that he would arrive at a vitalistic view of life and art. Indeed modern vitalists, like Bergson and Driesch, have all felt his influence to a greater or less extent. One might ask: How is it that Schopenhauer, the first modern philosopher to stress the importance of Will, has turned out the arch-preacher for the renunciation of Will? The fact is that he is trying to blend together Platonic idealism, primitive Buddhism and his own vitalistic view in an all-embracing system without asking whether these three trends of throught are compatible with one another. Plato would have been surprised to hear that Idea is but the objectification of Will or that Will should be denied altogether; and we wonder what Buddha would say to the idea of teaching the lesson of resignation through the representation of tragedy.

But let us turn to facts.

Homer, the father of the tragic poets according to Plato, relates the meeting of Odysseus and Achilles in Hell and the view of the greatest of all Greek heroes on life and death. Achilles, on being congratulated for the great honour he enjoyed among the dead, answered Odysseus in these words: «Nay, speak not com-

fortably to me of death, oh great Odyseus. Rather would I live on ground as the hireling of another, with a landless man who had no great livelihood, than bear sway among all the dead that be departed» (8). Certainly that does not sound like resignation, nor bears out Schopenhauer's contention that «if one knocked on the graves and asked the dead whether they would wish to rise again, they would shake their heads». The two great Greek tragic heroines, Antigone and Iphigenia, both died with a deep regret. «Unwept, unfriended, without marriage song», lamented Antigone, «I am led forth in my sorrow on the journey that can be delayed no more. No longer, hapless one, may I behold yon day-star's sacred eye!» (9). Iphigenia's long supplication to her father is even more heartrending. She told him plainly that it was folly to wish to die and that «a miserable life is far better than a noble death» (10). Let it not be supposed that they were women and so lacked the courage to face death. Read the «Alcestis» of Euripides and ask yourself whether the central theme of the play is not a rather unheroic clinging to life. Schopenhauer himself admits that in ancient tragedy the spirit of resignation seldom appears. He examines play after play and confesses that Oedipus, Hippolytus and many other Greek tragic characters did not die resigned. But he says, however, «all because the ancients had not yet attained to the summit and goal of Tragedy, or indeed of the view of life itself». A theory of Tragedy which is admittedly inapplicable to the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles is certainly not to be taken seriously. Schopenhauer himself seems to be aware of this difficulty, for he says that the conclusion of a tragedy — that life is worthless and should be renounced — may be only implicit and the spectators have to draw it for themselves. But surely this is to expect too much of spectators who are not imbued with Schopenhauer's own pessimistic ideas. Besides this objection, the supposition that the spectators should go further than the tragic heroes themselves in detesting life is hardly consistent with Schopenhauer's doctrine of pity.

Schopenhauer sides with the moderns. But which of the Shakespeare's tragic heroes «freely and joyfully surrender life itself» as Schopenhauer describes? It is certainly not Hamlet, nor Othello, nor Macbeth, nor King Lear. Like Hegel, Schopenhauer has his own favourite example, the Gretchen in «Faust». «The great Goethe has given us a distinct and visible representation of this denial of will, brought about by great misfortunes and despair of all deliverance, in his immortal masterpiece «Faust», in the story of the suffering of Gretchen. I know no parallel to this in poetry. It is a perfect example of the second path that leads to the denial of will» (11). But he seems to have written this with no regard on the actual text. When Faust enters the prison to save Gretchen, in her delirium she takes him to be the executioner and cries in agony:

Weh! Weh! Sie kommen. Bittrer Tod!

and she implores him for delay:

Du holst mich schon um Mitternacht.
Erbarme dich und lass mich leben!
Ist's Morgen früh nicht zeitig genung ?
Bin ich doch noch so jung, so jung!
Und soll schon sterben!

Would Schopenhauer call this «a perfect example of the denial of the Will-to-live»? It is a cry which has been re-echoed again and again throughout the ages and in all countries, from Antigone, Iphigenia, Jephtha, to the «Jeune Captive» of André Chénier.

O mort! tu peux attendre; éloigne, éloigne — toi;
Va console les cœurs que la honte, l'effroi,
Le pâle désespoir dévore.
Pour moi Palès encore a des asiles verts,
Les Amours des baisers, les Muses des concerts:
Je ne veux point mourir encore.

«La honte l'effroi, le pâle désespoir», are not these exactly the lot of Gretchen? But she shows a great reluctance to renounce the will to live all the same.

Certainly one could find no better example than Gretchen to refute Schopenhauer's theory of resignation.

III.

Schopenhauer inspired another German pessimist, Nietzsche. In his book on «The Birth of Tragedy» ,Nietsche borrows the names of two Greek deities, Dionysus and Apollo, to symbolize two fundamental psychological experiences. The Dionysian spirit is the more primordial of the two. It is awakened by narcotic drugs and by the approach of the spring. It is a state of mind akin to drunkenness. Under the Dionysian influence man gives full rein to his primitive instincts, and abandons himself with his fellow-revellers to riotous orgies of wine, song, dance and sexual licences. All barriers between man and man are broken, and once more man becomes one with Nature and sinks himself in the mysterious Primordial Unity. He walks in enchantment and is «on the point of taking a dancing flight into the air». Like a restless child, he builds and destroys, never satisfied with anything constant and fixed. He must give full vent to his exuburiant energy. Life for him is a dancing feast and happiness consists in incessant activities and barbaric licence. In Nietzsche's own word, the Dionysian man «stands for strenuous becoming».

Apollo on the other hand is the God of light and the designer of forms and shapes. The Apollonian man is a sedentary philosopher who takes a quiet though intense delight in contemplating the beauteous appearance of the dream-world. The follies of men, the tricks of fortune, indeed the whole Divine Comedy of life, pass before him like entrancing shining pictures. The sight gives him delight and set him free from the pain of becoming. He cries to himself: «It is a dream! I will dream on!» Thougtful, conservative and rational, he values above all things measured limitation, harmony, freedom from wider emotions, and philosophical calmness. His maxims are: «Know thyself» and «Not too much». So Nietz-

sche designates him as «the glorious image of the principium individuationis», «standing for the state of rapt repose in the presence of a visionary world, in the presence of the world of beautiful appearance designed as a deliverance from becoming» (12).

From these two antagonistic spirits spring up two different kinds of art. The Dionysian spirit finds expression in music. Music, as Schopenhauer has said, is the direct objectification of will without the intervention of Idea. In Nietzsche's own words, it is «the formless and intangible reflection of the primordial pain». «The Dionysian musician is, without any picture, himself just primordial pain and the primordial re-echoing thereof» (13). Music is born of the Dionysian dance, and with it lyric poetry takes rise. Lyric poetry is «the effulguration of music in picture and concepts». Its primitive form, the folk song, is really «the musical mirror of the world». History shows that every period which is highly productive in popular songs has been most violently disturbed by the Dionysian Festival (14). The Apollonian spirit, on the other hand, reveals itself in the plastic arts and epic poetry. In these arts the vision of Apollo builds up before us a heroic world, precise in lines and contours, harmonious in colours and shades, sublime, brillant and «floating in sweet sensuality». The glorious figures of the Olympian Gods on the gables of the Parthenon and the shining pictures of the superb heroes of the Trojan wars drawn by Homer are best instances.

The distinction between the Dionysian and the Apollonian art may be described as one between the subjective and the objective. Opposed in spirit as they are, they are yet complementary each of the other. Lyric poetry, for instance, is preeminently a subjective art; but in expressing the innermost feelings and sentiments, it has «objectified» them and hold them before the mind's eye as pictures. «In every type and elevation of art we demand specially and first of all the conquest of the subjective». It is «impossible to believe in any truly artistic production, however insigificant, without objectification, without pure interestless con-

templation» (15). The drunkard becomes an artist in becoming a dreamer. Music, as we have seen, is the objectification of Will or the Dionysian spirit; lyric poetry may be regarded as the objectification of music, translating music into tangible concepts and images. Thus in lyric poetry we have the rudimentary reconciliation between the Dionysian and the Apollonian spirit. This explains the close relation that always exists between the lyricist and the musician. It explains also why Schiller's poetic images are generally developed out of a musical mood. A lyricist is in the first instance a Dinysian artist and reveals his Primordial Ego in music. «Under the Apollonian dream inspiration, this music again becomes visible to him in a symbolic dream picture».

Nietzsche draws an analogy between the birth of Tragedy and the birth of lyric poetry. Indeed tragedies are but «the highest development of lyrical poems» (16). They are «music in Apollonian symbols». According to tradition, Tragedy sprang from tragic chorus. This Nietzsche takes to be the artistic imitation of the crowd of primitive Dionysian revellers, who, in the state of excitement and enchantment, move entirely in a world of illusion, behold themselves metamorphosed into satyrs worshipping their lord and master Dionysus. Thus they are both actors and spectators at the same time. Dionysus, the focus of vision, was at first only imagined as present; but later on he was actually represented and displayed before the eyes of all revellers. He became the prototype of the tragic hero. Prometheus, Oedipus and other great tragic figures are all the masks of the original Dionysus. Thus the Dionysian suffering is steeped in the Appollonian light, music has engendered myths, and Tragedy is born.

But why should the birth of Tragedy have taken place only in Greece and not in elsewhere? To answer this question, we have to give first some account of Nietzsche's pessimistic view of life.

As a faithful disciple of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche believes that life is rooted in pain. The world is regarded by him as «the perpetually changing, perpetually new vision of the most suffering,

most antithetical, most contradictory being». It cannot be morally justified. «Before the tribunal of morality, life must constantly and inevitably be the loser, because life is something essentially unmoral». Morality is a secret instinct to disown life. Thus Christianity, recognizing only moral values, was really «the nausea and surfeit of Life for Life, which only disguised, concealed and decked itself out under the belief in 'another' or 'better' world». For the moral interpretation of the world, Nietzsche proposes to substitute an aesthetic one. Reality is painful, but its appearance is enchanting. Do not look to the actual world for justice and happiness, for you will never find them; but look at it as an artist looks at a landscape and you will find it beautiful and sublime. Such is the meaning of Nietzsche's motto «Redemption through appearance». Both the Dionysian and the Appollonian art are ways of escape: The Dionysian art, to escape from the pain of Being, plunges into the whirl-pool of incessant Becoming; the Apollonian, to escape the pain of Becoming, rivets its glance on the appearance of Being.

The Greeks, in Nietzsche's opinion, were a sentitive race, «singularly qualified for the most delicate and severe suffering». The reputed «Hellenic Cheerfulness» is merely «a glowing sunset». They were really pessimists. It is of course surprising to hear that the Greeks were pessimistic in their age of glory. But Nietzsche meets the objection by saying that there is «suffering in overfulness itself». The Greeks had glanced with piercing eye into the cruelty of nature and the terrible destructive processes of universal history. They would have longed for a Buddhistic negation of will, if art had not saved them .«To be able to live, the Greeks had, from direst necessity, to create the Olympian Gods». The Olympian world served as an «artistic middle world» between the Greeks and the horrors of existance. It shielded them from the titanic powers of nature, the vulture of Prometheus, the terrible fate of the wise Oedipus, the family curse of the Atridae and other forces which had wrought the ruin of great heroes. In a word, they

accepted the aesthetic interpretation of the world. Dionysus, the prototype of the tragic hero, is a symbol of the primordial suffering as well as of the primordial unity. Touched by the magic wand of Apollo, he is redeemed from suffering and becomes an Art-God. «The sufferer longs for beauty; he begets it» (17), and the result is the Greek Tragedy.

Tragic pleasure is then primarily an aesthetic pleasure, or an Apollonian delight in the beauteous form of a painful realily. But Nietzsche does not seem to be satisfied with this view, for he goes further to assert that it is «a metaphysical comfort». It comes from the thought that, «in spite of the perpetual change of phenomena, life at bottom is indestructibly powerful and beautiful». The Universal Will or Eternal Life permits nothing to stand still; it demands incessant destruction as well as continuous regeneration. Thus «the hero, the highest manifestatoin of the will, il disavowed for our pleasure, because he is only phenomenon, and because the Eternal Life of the Will is not affected by his annihilation. 'We believe in Eternal Life', Tragedy exclaims». In Tragedy Nature speaks to us: «Be as I am! I, beneath the perpetual change of appearances; I, the eternally creative, ever urging into existence; I, the mother of all things, ever satisfying myself with this apparent change!» (18). In other words, the death of hero is but the falling of a drop of water into a great ocean, or the sinking of individuality in the Primordial Unity. It is a collapse of the Principle of Individuation which is the source of pain. So the pleasure that we experience in a tragedy is a pleasure of freedom and liberty, a joy comparable to what a child often feels in regaining the bosom of its mother.

IV.

Nietzsche regards himself as «the first tragic philosopher», and indeed the passionate outbursts and fantastic images of «The Birth of Tragedy» have dazzled the eye of many a reader. He

speaks in oracles and that gives him the air of a prophet. But when we strip him of his bacchanal garlands and weeds and try to see him as a sober man in the clear light of Apollo, we shall find him a strange mixture of Schopenhauer and Hegel. Schopenhauer above all. In «the Birth of Tragedy» Nietzsche missed no occasion to show his great admiration for his master. But in later years, he regretted, however, to «have obscured and spoiled Dionysian anticipations with Schopenhauerian formulae». Elsewhere he confessed that his book was intended as a corrective to Schopenhauer's one-sided view of Tragedy. «Oh» he cries, «How differently Dionysus spoke to me!» The best way of arriving at a just estimate of his doctrine is perhaps to examine how far he resembles, and how far he differs from, Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer, we remember, opposes the world as Will to the World as Idea. The world as Will, as it is governed by the principle of Individuation, is necessarily a source of conflict and suffering. To escape from the pain inherent in Will, there is only one way open to us, and that is to take refuge in the world as Idea. The sore of reality is to be healed by the beauty of its appearance. Such is the central idea underlying «The world as Will and Idea». Now Nietzsche takes up this idea almost en bloc, and only gives it a fantastic and figurative garment. What is the Dionysian spirit, if it is not Will? and what is the Apollonian spirit, if it is not Idea? For Schopenhauer, the root of all pains and evils is to be sought in Will; so is it for Nietzsche. For Schopenhauer, life is not to be lived but to be contemplated, that is exactly what Nietzsche means by substituting an aesthetic justification of life for a moral one. For Schopenhauer, music is the direct copy of Will independent of images and concepts, whereas poetry and plastic arts copy the Will as objectified in Idea, i. e. the appearance of reality. Nietzsche accepts the distinction and adds to it the observation that music engenders images, and poetry, including tragedy, is music translated into images, or, in his own symbolic language, the Dionysian spirit reconciled with the Apollonian. The

whole doctrine of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche may be reduced to two propositions:

1. Art reflects life, i.e. concrete images express the inner and intangible feelings and sentiments;
2. Art is an escape from life, i.e. the contemplation of images makes us forget the pain that accompanies our feelings and sentiments.

Both these propositions are true, but they have become commonplace nowadays. The prevalence of these ideas is however mainly due to the teaching of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and for it they have our thanks.

But there is one point in which the disciple parts company with his master. Nietzsche repudiates the Schopenhauerian idea of resignation and makes the distinction between the universal Primordial Will which is reality and the individual objectification of will which is phenomenon. The Primordial Will which animates the individual Wills is always in the state of change: its Being consists in Becoming. To stand still is to cease its function as the Primordial Will. In the perpetual destruction of individual wills we can see the eternal force of the Primordial Will, for destruction always leads to regeneration. It is due to the revelation of this Dionysian wisdom that the death of the tragic hero gives us a «metaphysical comfort». This idea seems to be peculiar to Nietzsche, but it is really a development of Schopenhauer's attack against the Principle of Individuation, and ultimately it may be traced back to the Hegelian idea of the abrogation of one-sided ethical forces for the restoration of Universal Harmony.

We have followed the traditional view of historians of philosophy in describing Nietzsche's doctrine as «Pessimistic». Indeed the sub-title of «the Birth of Tragedy», «Hellenism and Pessimism», seems to lend support to this view. But the epithet «pessimistic» is misleading when applied to Nietzsche's theory of Tragedy. Nietzsche himself is aware of this, for when he calls himself «the first tragic philosopher», he adds significantly, «that is

the utmost antithesis and antipode to a pessimistic philosopher». He is a pessimist only so far as he views the world as a moralist. But he refuses to take a moral view of life and insists on what he has called «the aesthetic justification of life». «Only as an aesthetic phenomenon is existence and the world eternally justified». From this point of view, he is really an optimist. Life, though eternally rooted in pain, is after all worth living, when you regard it with the eye of an artist. By the miracle of Apollo, the Dionysian suffering is turned into a blessing. Nietzsche has illustrated this truth with the story of King Midas and Silenus. When Midas had captured the wise Silenus, he asked him what was the best thing for man. Silenus answered: «What is best of all is forever beyond your reach: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. The second best for you, however, is soon to die». Nietzsche takes this to be the Dionysian wisdom. But with the Greeks, thanks to their Apollonian vision, this wisdom was reversed. Existence under the bright sun-shine of the Olympian Gods whom they have created in their vision, became a thing desirable in itself. So with the Homeric heroes it is truer to say: «To die early is worst of all for them, the second worst is — some day to die at all». That is Nietzsche's own creed with regard to art, and that is certainly far from being pessimistic.

Is there any contradiction in the philosophy of Nietzsche? Call it «contradiction» if you like, but life itself is full of contradictions, so is Tragedy. An one-sided pessimistic view of life as well as of Tragedy is no less inadequate than an one-sided optimistic one. Life is a blessing as well as an evil, it gives us joy as well as pain, it leads us to hope as well as to despair. Tragedy presents to us a similar Janus-faced nature. It goes without saying that Tragedy cannot come into being from an entirely jocund mood. To create as well as to appreciate a fine tragedy, one must feel deeply about the dark side of life, the tricks of Fate and the existence of evils and injustice. But at the same time, one must not shrink from these unhappy things in Tregedy. Tragedy involves

reactions against suffering. Cowardice and submissiveness are the last thing that one could excuse in a tragic hero. A tragic hero may be wicked, but he has always a touch of heroic grandeur. If one does not feel some sort of exultation over human worth in tragedy, one has certainly missed its essential spirit. Read a great masterpiece of Aeschylus, Shakespeare or Schiller and think of the famous theories of Hegel and Schopenhauer, you will see that they have each got hold of only half truth and that such epithets as «pessimism» and «optimism», when applied singly to Tragedy, are equally very inadequate. Take, for exemple, Prospero's speech in «The Tempest»:

Be Cheerful, Sir.

Our revels now are ended: these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air,
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind: we are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

The pessimistic note is unmistakable, but that is not all. The poet advices us to «be cheeuful» in spite of the fact that all will fade like an insubstantial pageant. The grandeur of the spectacle and the magnificence of the rhetoric obliterate our sense of the vanity of vanities. It is, as Nietzsche has admirably put it, the Dionysian Primordial suffering steeped in the radiant light of Apollo. It is Nietzsche's great merit to have seized both sides of the truth. «The Birth of Tragedy», in spite of its inconsistencies, is perhaps after all the best book on Tragedy that has ever come from the hand of a philosopher.

CHAPTER IX.

«THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY»: PLEASURE IN PAIN.

I.

After discussing the pessimistic interpretations of Tragedy, we may pause for a while to consider the psychology of pessimism itself — a topic which, though not apparently connected with the problem of tragic pleasure, will ultimately throw some valuable light on it.

Both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche represent the philosophical side of the Romantic movement. One of the characteristic of the Romantic writers is the cult of melancholy, and the pessimistic philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche may be regarded as its defense or apology. To those who have no sympathy for Romanticism, there is always something affected and morbid in the attitude of Werther, Childe Harold, René and their whole tribe . The disillusions and sorrows in life have given them occasion for so many sighs and tears, yet they go on to live and try to make life enjoyable in spite of their professed pessimism and

melancholy. The fact is that they take a positive delight in brooding over evils and wrongs. The «Mal du siècle» is not so much a disease as a refuge. Egoists as the Romantics for the most part are, they have each their fancies to mould the world after their own particular wishes. The world is not always malleable and they are driven to revolt. Like children who become sulky when their desires are thwarted, the Romantics keep themselves aloof in a corner, looking on the world in despair and with contempt. To their amazement and satisfaction, they find in the melancholic humour a savour which is not altogether disagreable. It gives them an air of aristocracy and self-superiority, and reveals to them a mysterious glamour of the darker side of life. Thus they come to make a victory of their defeat and turn melancholy into a cult.

> But hail, thou Goddess sage and holy,
> Hail, divinest melancholy!

They cry after *il penseroso*. Nature enchants them only when she is veiled in evening clouds or left in a savage and desolate state. It is

> Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
> with short shrill shriek flits by an leathern wing,

that the Romantic bard, clad in black mantle and with downcast eyes, resorts to a deserted village, a country churchyard or a solitary forest, meditating on «graves and worms», calling up the memory of lost love or weaving unhappy far-off things in plaintive numbers. He looks back to the past with regret and sorrow and he looks to the future in despair, yet in his eyes full of tears there often beams a ray of joy and bliss.

Travellers in the Tyrol may sometimes pass by a little rustic cottage on the wall of which it is inscribed: «I am living, but for how long? I shall die without knowing where or when. I go I know not whither, and I am astonished that I am gay *in spite of* all that. Lord Christ, protect my house!» (1). Of the Romantics it may be said that they are gay *because* of all that. Melancholy for them is a religion and a spiritual comfort. Writing of Byron, Heine

exclaims: «They pity him because he was melancholy. It not God melancholy? Melancholy is God's gladness» (2). Dyer writes in «The Ruins of Rome»:

'Tis sweetly soothing sympathy to pain,
A gently wakening call to health and ease,
How musical!....
How sweet thy diapason, Melancholy!'

Keats is sometimes «half in love with easeful Death» and assures us:

Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine.

«The first and only pleasure» that Leopardi found in Rome came from the tears he shed on the tomb of Tasso. The French Romantic poets are even more eloquent in the glorification of Melancholy. Lamartine often takes delight in the sombre aspect of nature which is more in harmony with the sadness in his heart:

Salut, derniers beaux jours: le deuil de la nature
Convient à la douleur et plaît à mes regards.

Alfred de Vigny makes stoic heroism an article of faith:

J'aime la majesté des souffrances humaines.

The Muse in Musset's «Nuit d'Octobre» assures the poet:

Pour vivre et pour sentir, l'homme a besoin des pleurs,

and asks him:

Aimerais-tu les fleurs, les prés et la verdure,
Les sonnets de Pétrarque, et les chants des oiseaux,
Michel-Ange et les arts, Shakespeare et la nature,
Si tu n'y retrouvais quelques anciens sanglots?

Similar instances may be easily multiplied, but these are quite sufficient to show that from the bush of thorns the Romantic poets often pluck rose blossoms. Melancholy itself becomes for them a source of delight.

Have we said «the Romantic poets»? Perhaps it is inexact to attribute the cult of melancholy to the Romantic poets alone.

Romanticism has only accentuated a general tendency of the literature of all ages.

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought, as Shelly has said. Do we not feel a touch of melancholy in Homer and above all in Virgil? Has melancholy ever enjoyed a greater vogue than in the Elezabethan England? Shakespeare has drawn many great melancholy figures, Hamlet, Antonio, Jacques among others. «Why so melancholy?» was once a polite greeting. Stephen in Jonson's «Everyman in his Humour» and Don Amado in Shakespeare's «Love's Labour's Lost» affect melancholy to cut a «gentlemanlike» figure (3). It was Fletcher's firm conviction that:

Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

Every age has its Werther and there is no sign that the race is dying out.

Perhaps there is nothing which inspires more horror and dread than Death. Yet from the Greek Elegiasts to Charles Baudelaire death has been constantly a favourite motif in art and literature. It has often been painted in all its horrid aspects: «limbs sundered from the trunk; decaying human remains ,grave-diggers playing with a skull, grinning skeletons and even dripping entrails» (4). The people at the time of the Renaissance seem to be particularly fond of the imagery of skeletons and graves. One may suspect that such themes as the Passion of Christ and Saint Sebastien owe their vogue in Europe to the delight in the horrid sight of death as well as to their religious significance. Among the poets François Villon may be taken to represent the macabre poetry of the 14th century. The «Ballade des Pendus» is a typical instance. It may be a fair question for meditation: why such a painful subject has not been avoided by poets and artists? Perhaps like all other images which delight people of a melancholic temper, that of death is not so painful as it is generally supposed. Socrates at his death, we are told by Phaedo in Plato's Dialogue, experienced with his disciples a «certain wonderful passion and an unusual

mixture of pleasure and grief». Romeo in Shakespeare's Tragedy may have felt the same mixed feeling when he has killed Paris and knows that his own doom is near:

> Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.
> How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have been merry! which their keepers call
> A lightning before death.

David Hume in his essay on «Tragedy» also speaks of the feeling of mourners as containing a secret sparkle of joy. Freud even goes so far as to suppose that there is a Death instinct as primitive and universal as the sex Instinct itself. Judging from these and many other well-known instances, may we not suggest that even so painful a theme as death contains a germ of pleasure in it? And that such pleasure is some-what similar to the pleasure which often accompanies melancholy?

II.

The account given above of the cult of melancholy and of the death motif in art serves a useful prelude to a discussion of the nature of pleasure and pain. How comes it, then, that men should take delight in images and thoughts which are generally acknowledged to be painful in themselves? Why should melancholy have become a vogue? Why has the death motif occurred so often in art and literature? The voluminous «Anatomy of Melancholy» of Robert Burton has left these questions unanswered, and when we turn to modern psychology, we are disappointed to find that the melancholic mood, which not only prevailed in the Elezabethan England, but swept the whole Europe for almost a century during the Romantic movement ,should have escaped the attention of psychologists altogether. Writers on the psychology of feeling generally confine themselves to pleasure and pain each in its pure elementary state. The so-called «mixed feeling» which really occurs more often in our concrete experience than either pure pain or pleasure, is certainly a hard nut to crack; but it is just in the

«mixed feeling» that we should look for a key to the problem of feeling in general. We have spoken much of «tragic pleasure», but so far we have not discussed the nature of pleasure itself. Now we propose to fill the gap at once.

Two conclusions stand out of the facts adduced in the preceding section:

1. Pain is not always followed by the act of evasion;
2. Pleasure and pain are not mutually inhibitive.

These conclusions, though negative in appearance,, are of surpeme importance to the psychology of feeling in general and to that of tragic pleasure in particular. Let us examine them in turn.

The relation between feeling and conation has always been a subject of contraversy. Is feeling determined by conation or conation by feeling? Are things pleasant because we want them and painful because we avoid them, or do we want things because they are painful? The latter alternative represents the common sense view and at first sight it seems indisputable. No one doubts that children desire to eat bonbons because eating bonbons is pleasant and avoid touching fire because touching fire is painful. In psychology this view is known as Hedonism which was formulated by Jeremy Bentham in the following words:

«Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other, the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: Every effort we can make to throw off our subjection will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it» (5).

The Hedonistic theory is the psychological basis of utilitarianism and has enjoyed a great vogue in England through the exposition of Mill, Bain and others. It still holds its influence in the academic circle. The Freudian Psychology seems to be also based

on the assumption that man always endeavour to secure pleasure and avoid pain.

But the opposite view or the Hormic theory seems to be gaining ground in recent years. It has been formulated by Prof. McDougall in these terms:

«The Hormic theory—— asserts that conation (action, attention, striving, desire, volition, activity of every kind) is immediately determined by cognition and that pleasure and pain result from the conation, are determined by the striving; pleasure, when striving attains its mental goal, or progresses toward it; pain, when striving is thwarted or obstructed and fails to achieve, or progress toward, its goal» (6).

This doctrine, in spite of its paradoxical nature, is really as old as Aristotle who regards the highest pleasure as the result of «unimpeded activity». In modern time it is maintained by Schopenhauer, Hartmann and most of the Scotch philosophers.

We are not concerned here to discuss these theories in all their aspects, they interest us only in so far as they affect the problem of melancholy and ultimately that of tragic pleasure. In our view the Hormic theory seems to be nearer the truth. Psychological Hedonism is an instance of «pathetic fallacy», it supposes that things are pleasant or painful in themselves apart from their relation to our interests and attitudes. As a matter of fact, pleasure and pain are our subjective experiences, they are the feeling-tones of our mental activities. Things in general are indifferent to us, they become pleasant and painful only when they are in some way related to our interest, i.e. when they call forth in us a certain definite mental attitude. They are pleasant or painful as they go with or against our mental attitude at the moment. Pleasure is satisfaction in its simplest form, and satisfaction implies that there is some desire or conative tendency which is satisfied; so it is with pain, anything that is painful to us frustrates or thwarts some of our natural tendencies. It is a wellknown fact that pleasure and pain are never constant, they vary with our interests and attitudes.

To return to the problem of melancholy. Now the cult of melancholy can hardly be explained from the Hedonistic point of view. The Hedonist has to know what is pleasant or painful before he makes up his mind to want it or to abhor it. Now what would he say of such things as despised love, separation, disillusion, discontent with the world, suffering, evils, death, etc.? Would he say that these things are painful in themselves? Then, according to the Hedonistic theory they should repel us instead of attracting us. But it is just these things which often hold a melancholy gentleman in a kind of voluptuous rapture. He broods over them, they come to haunt his mind in spite of himself. This fact obviously does not accord well with the Hedonistic position. Would the Hedonist meet the objection by saying that some people indulge themselves in melancholy thoughts just because there is pleasure in them? But this does not agree with the description which common sense gives to such things as despired love, suffering, death etc., and we may well ask by what standard the Hedonist describes one set of things as pleasant and another set of things as painful. We do not deny that there may be pleasure in melancholy but the question hinges on whether the pleasure in melancholy is the cause or the effect of the indulgence in melancholy. The Hedonist would be driven by his doctrine to say that the pleasure in melancholy comes before the indulgence in melancholy — a conclusion which is at once against strict logic and at variance with common sense.

From the Hormic point ot view, melancholy is much more easily analysed and explained. According to the Hormic theory all unimpeded activity is followed by pleasure and all obstructed activity by pain. Melancholy is itself the result of obstructed activity or thwarted desire, so it is generally accompanied with a painful feeling-tone. But as indulgence in melancholy is itself a kind of mentl activity, it gives vent to the pent-up energy, so it causes a kind of pleasure in its turn. All activities may be regarded as the expression of vital energy, and the nature of their

accompanying feeling-tone is determined by the success or failure of the expression. Pleasure results when the vital energy succeeds in finding its proper outlet. So any feeling, even if it is painful, may become pleasant in the end, if it is freely expressed, the smile of a child after weeping and the calm and joy which we all experience after passion is spent, are typical instances. Similarly, any feeling, even if it is pleasant, may become painful in the end, if it is denied its free expression, thus it is painful to suppress a laughter or keep a secret. By the word «expression» we mean primarily the natural outflow of an instinctive impulse in muscular and glandular activities, i.e. in the sense used by Darwin when he spoke of «the expresions of Emotions»; and secondarily the embodiment of a feeling in some form of art through the medium of symbols such as words, sounds, colours, lines etc., i.e. in the sense of «artistic expression». A feeling is already half expressed when it is intensely felt, i.e. when it has discharged its attached energy in certain appropriate bodily activities. It would be fully expressed when it is externalized in tangible symbols and communicated to others. Expression, both in its ordinary psychological sense and in its artistic sense, helps to ease the burdened heart and gives pleasure. The pleasure in melancholy is the pleasure of expression, of letting a painful feeling have its way without arbitrarily suppressing it. Take for example the case of despised love. Love implies striving toward a goal, the return of love by the beloved object. As it is not returned, its activity is obstructed and fails to attain its goal. So it gives rise to disappointment which is painful. In this disappointment the flow of vital energy changes its course, it turns from striving toward the object to brooding over the failure of that striving. Such brooding over wrongs, which is an instance of melancholy, gives vent to the mental energy which is otherwise obstructed. The subject has been mentally active, though outwardly he seems to be paralysed. This explains why melancholy is never unmixed with a certain degree of pleasure. By this subtle apparatus of turning pain into pleasure, the

mind is constantly recovering its equilibrium which it has lost through the obstruction of external forces.

The case of melancholy shows very clearly that pleasure and pain are not mutually inhibitive. Just as pain often contains in itself the germ of pleasure, so pleasure may also contain in itself the germ of pain. «While we are laughing», says Keats, «the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events — while we are laughing, it sprouts, it grows, and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck». Pleasure and pain, like good and evil, are correlative terms, each owes its peculiar nature to its opposition to, and contrast with, the other. They not only give rise to each other, but often co-exist and are blended together in all proportions. As the generally accepted view is that the feeling-tone of a conscious activity is always one of pleasure or of pain and that when they are balanced, they neutralize each other like acid and alkali in solution, it is incumbent on us to make our point more clear. Let us take the emotion of pity for instance. Is it merely pleasant or merely painful? As we have analysed it in Chapter V, pity consists of two factors: love and the sense of regret. As its contains the element of love, it is pleasant; as it contains the element of regret, it is also painful. Imagine a mother nursing her sick child, it is obvious that her feeling cannot be described as untempered pleasure, for her love borders on pity and anxiety; and pain gradually predominates, as these sentiments become stronger. Pity will not be what it is, if the painful element is taken away from it. Even when pity enters into an aesthetic emotion, it still contains pain as one of its essential ingredients. Pity as an aesthetic emotion, as we have shown in Chapter V, is related to the sense of the graceful. A graceful thing pleases us because it expresses tenderness and love; but if we analyse our feeling carefully, there is also a slight element of pain in it, the weak and fragile appearance of the object somehow makes us sorry for it. Fear is another emotion with a mixed feeling-tone. For most people it seems to be a purely painful emotion. But is has also its attrac-

tions. Adventurers are not really «fearless», they simply love to run risks and taste what fear is like. Fear serves as a strong stimulant and calls forth an extraordinary amount of vital energy to cope with the dangerous situation. It shocks and vivifies the soul, so it contains alos a dose of pleasure. As an aesthetic emotion, it is related to the sense of the sublime. A sublime object, as we have shown in Chapter V, pleases us while it overwhelms us. The painful element is so prominent in it that it often comes near to terror.

If we apply the same analysis to other emotions such as anger, hatred, jealousy, curiosity, mourning, sorrow at separation etc., we shall come to the same conclusion that pleasure and pain are often blended together to form a mixed feeling-tone which is not adequately described as either pleasure or pain alone. The idea of mixed feeling goes as far back as to the «Philibus» of Plato. Its existence has been amply proved by modern experimental work such as that of Dr. A. Wohlgemuth (7). It is also the underlying notion of the Freudian doctrine of «Ambivolence» or «bipolarity» (8). Love and hatred, for exemple, are not so antagonistic as they are generally supposed. We love, Freud tells us, unconsciously the object which we hate or fear, as in the case of taboo; and very often we also hate unconsciouly the object which we love, as in the case of the «Oedipus complex». Some modern psychologists, Ewald Hecker for example, think that in comedy and laughter, pleasure and pain also pass into each other in a manner analogous to tickling. Thus it is quite legitimate to assume the existence of a kind of pleasure which is mixed with, and more or less enhanced by, pain. This we have found to be the case with melancholy, and we shall proceed to show that it is also the case with the delight in Tragedy.

III.

The results we have obtained so far may be summarized as follows:

1. Melancholy is a predominent mood in poetry in general;
2. The melancholic mood comes from brooding over wrongs, it is painful as it results from obstructed activity; but such pain may give rise to pleasure when it is intensely felt and fully expressed;
3. This analysis of melancholy confirms the Hormic theory of feeling: Pleasure follows all successful activities, whereas pain results from the obstruction which our vital energy encounters in its centrifugal course; the removal of such obstruction converts pain into plasure;
4. Pleasure and pain do not neutralize each other: they are often blended together to form a mixed feeling-tone.

Now the enjoyment of Tragedy comes under these general principles. In Chapter V, we have shown that the tragic differs from the merely sad in that it possesses an inspiring or uplifting power which the latter lacks. But that does not imply that there is not a touch of sadness or melancholy in great tragedies. The famous choric song about the impotence of man before the divine force in the «Prometheus Bound», Hamlet's soliloquy beginning with «To be or not to be», Macbeth's comparison of life with a tale told by an idiot and many other passages in tragedies prove to the contrary. Tragedy has always a pessimistic note in it, however that note may be subdued to an under-tone by the more prominent note of heroism and grandeur. A part of our pleasure in Tragedy is due to the presence of such a pessimistic note, and it is for that reason that in Tragedy we do not experience a pleasure pure and simple, but mixed with a certain degree of pain. It is a mixed feeling more or less similar to that sad delight which some people often derive from indulging themselves in melancholy thoughts. The pain does not of course remain to the end; it is converted into pleasure so as to swell the positive pleasure that is in pity and fear and in the visualization of formal beauty. Such a conversion of pain into pleasure is first of all due to the relief of pain through bodily activities; as pain is felt, its

pent-up energy is discharged along the impulse which produce certain organic and muscular changes. It is also due to artistic expression: the pain is subdued and transfigured by the artist's creative imagination as it is projected out in artistic symbols. It is distilled through being «distanced». The subjugation of the painful, like the subjugation of the ugly, represents the crowning triumph of art. It cannot fail to arouse in us an exulting sense of life. «Great art cannot be itself pessimistic», says Prof. Abercrombie, «However much pessimism may go to its making. Thus «Leopardi has poems which terribly question the virtue of being alive; but even when they are doing so, life's achievement, in such noble art, of a superb mastery over things, is rousing conscious life to triumph in us» (8). What Prof. Abercrombie has called «a superb mastery over things» is certainly more visible in great tragedies than in the Poems of Leopardi or in the Novels of Thomas Hardy. Tragedy melts pain into pleasure and turns pessimism itself into a heightened sense of life. Such a triumph is in itself no small source of delight.

If we may be allowed to express our results in a mathematical equation, we may say that tragic pleasure is the sum total of the positive pleasure in pity and fear, plus the pleasure in formal beauty, plus the pleasure converted from the pain in pity and fear as a result of emotional relief or expression. There are of course certain other minor items which might be included here, but these are the essential factors.

The view we have thus expressed may be compared with some previous theories to which it bears some resemblances, but from which it may be distinguished. One of the earlier writers who saw the close relation between pleasure and pain in Tragedy was Fontenelle (9). He holds that pleasure and pain do not differ much in their cause. Tickling, for instance, usually produces a pleasant feeling, but if it is pushed too far, it may cause pain. Thus pleasure is simply a weakened or diminished pain. The feeling we experience in Tragedy is analogous; it is primarily pain, but this

pain is weakened and turned into pleasure by the sense of illusion. «There lurks at the bottom», Fontenelle writes, «a certain idea of falsehood in the whole of what we see. This idea, though weak and disguised, suffices to diminish the pain which we suffer from the misfortunes of those whom we love, and to reduce that affliction to such a pitch as converts it into a pleasure. We weep for the misfortune of a hero, to whom we are attached. In the same instant, we comfort ourselves, by reflecting that it is nothing but a fiction; and it is precisely that mixture of sentiments which composes an agreable sorrow ,and tears delights us».

David Hume in his interesting essay on «Tragedy» (11) regards Fontenelle's view as convincing but insufficient. He accepts the idea of conversion of pain into pleasure, but objects to the theory that such a conversion is effected by the sense of illusion. He points to the pathetic description of the butchery of the Sicilian captains by Verres in the Epilogues of Cicero. The incident is no fiction, so the deep sympathy and satisfaction aroused by Cicero in the judges and audience cannot be attributed to the sense of illusion. They are, in Hume's opinion, due to the effect of Eloquence, by which he means the beauty of artistic expression. The pleasure in Tragedy is likewise mainly due to the effect of eloquence. The mind is more readily agitated by pity and terror than by joy or satisfaction. When the mind has been agitated by pity and terror, it becomes more susceptible and responsive to the music and splendour of poetry. In reading or listening to a tragedy, we should have experienced pain, but that pain is overpowered by the pleasure caused by the beauty of artistic expression. «By this means», Hume says, «the un-easiness of the melancholy passion is not only overpowered and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind; but the whole impulse of those passions is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight which the eloquence raises in us».

Hume does not seem to have done enough justice to the idea of illusion emphasized by Fontenelle. Tragedy, as we have shown

in Chapter II, is a «distanced» representation of life. One of the «distancing» factors is undoubtedly the fictitious character of the events on the stage. It is true that in a moment of aesthetic rapture, we may not consciously reflect, as Fontenelle thinks, on the fact that «it is nothing but a fiction»; but is is equally true that we do not take tragedy as a piece of actual life which affects our personal hopes and fears. Tragedy floats, so to speak, in mid air; and it is just this ideal character that weakens the pain that usually accompanies similar misfortunes and calamities in actual life. What Hume has called «Eloquence» is just another «distancing» factor. Perhaps it is even truer to say that the effect of Eloquence heightens the sense of illusion, as in actual life tragic events are never set in a language which is both harmonious and artificial. Hume himself is aware of the distinction between the «distanced» and the «undistanced» view of a tragic event, for he says elsewhere: «If the movements of imagination be not predominant above those of the passion, a contrary effect follows». For example, «the shame, confusion and terror of Verres, no doubt, rose in proportion to the noble Eloquence of Cicero: so also did his pain and uneasiness». Thus for Eloquence to produce its effect, imagination must not be hampered by a practical attitude. The difference in feeling between Verres and the rest of the audience at Cicero's speech lies just in the fact that the judges and the audience, not personally concerned in the affair to the extent as Verres was, could look on the matter in a more detached spirit, i.e. they were in a better position to enjoy Cicero's description of the massacre more or less like a fiction or a picture.

Hume's view that the mind, agitated by pity and terror, becomes more susceptible to the effect of art, is a stroke of psychological insight and a valuable contribution to our understanding of tragic pleasure. The enjoyment of art is essentially an emotional experience, we must be prepared for it. The cords of the mind must be strung to a proper emotional key before the «formal» side of a tragedy could produce its maximum effect. Tragedy surpas-

ses other arts in the intensity of its effect just because by arousing two of the strongest emotions, it raises the mind to its highest emotional pitch and so renders it most fit for receiving the influence of art, for appreciating sound and images, proportion and harmony.

Both Fontenelle and Hume are to be credited for having emphasized the close relation between pleasure and pain in the enjoyment of Tragedy. But the nature of that relation they have left a mystery. In the First place, pleasure cannot be described merely as a weakened pain, as Fontenelle described it. The difference between pleasure and pain is not only one of quantity, but essentially one of quality. Pain may give rise to pleasure, but while it is still pain, it is not yet pleasure. Again pleasure and pain may be blended together, but the mixed feeling has its own distinctive character, it is neither pain weakened, nor pleasure over-heightened. Secondly Hume's thesis that the impulse of pain is turned to swell the delight caused by eloquence is equally open to criticism. By his own admission, the painful emotions are «overpowered and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind». Would he suppose that in this process the impulse of the painful emotions is not overpowered and effaced as well? When a pain is overpowered and effaced, it simply ceases to exist; it is not thereby converted into a pleasure. The impulse of pain and the impulse of pleasure are opposite to each other, how could one be turned to swell the current of the other?

We have expounded a simpler view than either of these. The pain in Tragedy is felt and expressed, and as it is felt and expressed, its pent-up energy is discharged and relieved. The relief of this pent-up energy means not only the removal of high tension, but also the awakening of a feeling of vitality. So it gives rise to pleasure. This pleasure, which is converted from pain, swells the current of the positive pleasure which is caused on the one hand by tragic pity and fear, and on the other, by the beauty of the play as a work of art such as unity and proportion, harmony in sound and images, profound truth in character-drawing, etc..

CHAPTER X.

«CATHARSIS» AND EMOTIONAL RELIEF.

I.

In the preceding Chapter we have shown that pleasure results from activity or the unobstructed flow of vital energy, and that even a painful feeling can give rise to pleasure when it finds its natural expression in bodily changes or in some form of art. The ground we have gained so far puts us in a better position to deal with the famous doctrine of tragic catharsis.

Speaking of the function of Tragedy, Aristotle says: «through pity and fear, Tragedy effects the proper catharsis of these emotions» (1). We have already discussed the nature of pity and fear in Tragedy in Chapter V, it only remains for us to discuss the enigmatic word «Catharsis». There has been an immense controversy about its meaning, and John Morley in his book on «Diderot» has stigmatized the endless discussion on the subject as «one of the disgraces of human intelligence, a grotesque monument of sterility». Those who come after Corneille, Lessing, Bernays and others are thus put in an embarrassing situation. Shall they leave

the question all alone or shall they lay another brick on «the monument of stirility»? Perhaps there is still an excuse for us to speak on so old a subject. The majority of Aristotle's commentators have confined themselves mainly to the philological side of the problem; their chief concern is to know whether this or that reading is warranted by the text of the «Poetics» itself, whether it is corroborated by other writings of Aristotle such as the «Politics», and finally whether it agrees with the generally accepted meaning of the word as used by Hippocrates, Plato and other Greek writers. All this is indispensable, but it is insufficient. When all is said and done about the philological side of the problem, it remains to know whether the meaning given to the word «Catharsis» is based on a sound psychology, i.e. in what sense it is psychologically true that Tragedy effects «Catharsis». It is to this latter task that we address ourselves in the present Chapter.

It lies beyond our limited purpose to enumerate the various meanings that have been proposed by scholars for the word «Catharsis». Roughly speaking, the controversy has centered around the problem whether the word is to be understood as a pathological metapher in the sense of «purgation», or as a metphor from the religious rite of lustration in the sense of «purification». Older writers such as Corneille and Lessing generally adopted the latter interpretation. Tragedy, it was held, has a moral function, it purifies our emotions and helps us to form virtuous habits of mind. But upholders of this interpretation are divided in their opinins concerning the two following questions:

1. What is exactly the object which undergoes the process of purification?

2. How does tragedy effect such a process of purification? With regard to the first question, three answers have been proposed. According to Corneille, tragedy purifies all the emotions represented in it, such as anger, love, ambition, hatred, envy etc.. Lessing repudiated this view on the ground that the phrase in Aristotle's definition « Τῶν Τοιούτων Παθημάτων » signifies not

the emotions represented in tragedy, but the emotions excited by it, i.e. «pity and fear and similar emotions». But Lessing seems to be inconsistent on this point, his statements often imply that tragedy purifies our soul of emotions rather than the emotions of their impure element (2).

The divergence of opinions is even greater with regard to the way in which purification is brought about. According to Corneille, it is the fear of incurring similar calamities that leads us to get rid of those evil passions which have been their cause. «La pitié d'un malheur», he says, «où nous voyons tomber nos semblables nous porte à la crainte d'une pareil pour nous, cette crainte, au désir de l'éviter; et ce désir, à purger, moderer, rectifier et même déraciner en nous la passion qui plonge à nos yeux dans ce malheur les personnes que nous plaignons» (3).

Lessing indentifies purification with moderation. In actual life men generally have too much or too little of pity and fear, Tragedy, by frequent excitation, moderates and reduces these emotions to just measure. «The tragic purification of the passion», he says, «consists merely in the conversion of pity and fear into virtuous habits of mind. But as with every virtue, according to Aristotle, there are on either side of it extremes of excess and defect, between wich it stands as a mean. Tragedy, if it is to turn pity into virtue, must be able to purify us from both extremes of pity; and it must do the same thing with fear likewise».

Others, again, emphasize the rôle of art in the purifying process of Tragedy. Through its artistic expression and through the fictitious nature of the calamities it represents, tragedy excites in us a kind of pity and fear which are less mixed with pain and consequently purer than the pity and fear of actual life. This is the view held by Fontenelle and Batteux (4).

But the moral interpretation of the word «Catharsis» has been discarded by most modern scholars, who, led by Weil and Bernays, are inclined to take the word in its medical sense. It means «purgation» or «alleviating discharge». They point as evi-

dence to the eighth book of the «Politics» where Aristotle discusses the purgative use of the flute. As this is the only passage in which Aristotle explains the meaning of «Catharsis», we had better quote it in full. After expressing his view that the flute is fit only for performances «which achieve purgation (Catharsis) rather than education», Aristotle goes on to say:

«What affects some minds violently is present in all to a greater or less degree, as, for instance, pity and fear, or devotional excitement. For some are much subject to this excitement, and when they listen to religious music which indulges their ecstasy, we see that they are cured, like people who have been purged by some drug. And the same must happen to those who are excessively compassionate or timid, and in general to all emotional persons, and to everybody in proportion as he is affected by emotions; all must be as it were purged and feel a pleasant relief. In the same way melodies which have this effect afford men a harmless pleasure» (5).

Bernays and others transferred the «Catharsis» of this passage in the «Politics» to the definition of Tragedy in the «Poetics». Just as an ardent music purges religious enthusiasm, so Tragedy purges pity and fear. But what is the exact nature of such a purgation? There is again a wide divergence of opinions. Bernays limited it to the simple idea of an emotional relief, a pleasuable vent for overcharged feelings. In Greek pathology, it is held, «Catharsis» is a general term for a physical clearance or discharge. There are certain peccant humours in the body, for example, which, if allowed to accumulate, would cause discomfort or harm. They may be expelled however by medical art. The purgation of pity and fear is analogous to the expulsion of peccant humours. The process is described by Bywater in these worts: «Pity and fear are elements in human nature, and in some men they are present in a disquieting degree. With these latter the tragic excitement is a necessity; but it is also in a certain sense good for all. It serves as a sort of medicine, producing a Catharsis to lighten

and relieve the soul of the accumulated emotion within it; and as the relief is wanted, there is always a harmless pleasure attending the process of relief» (6).

Butcher tries to combine the idea of purgation with that of purification. The emotions of pity and fear are not only relieved but also cleansed of their painful element. «In the medical language of Hippocrates», Butcher writes, «it (Catharsis) strictly denotes the removal of a painful or disturbing element from the organism, and hence the purifying of what remains, by the elimination of alien matter, Applying this to Tragedy, we observe that the feelings of pity and fear in real life contain a morbid and disturbing element. In the process of tragic excitation, they find relief, and the morbid element is thrown off. As the tragic action progresses, when the tumult of the mind, first roused, has afterwards subsided, the lower forms of emotion are found to have been transmuted into higher and more refined forms. The painful element in the pity and fear of reality is purged away; the emotions themselves are purged» (7).

II.

Three main ideas stand out of the various views on tragic Catharsis:

1. Tragedy affords an emotional relief, a harmless but pleasurable vent of pity and fear;
2. It eliminates the painful element from pity and fear;
3. It reduces quantitively the force of pity and fear by frequent excitation.

There is an obvious resemblance between these ideas and the modern Freudian Psychology. But we shall postpone the Freudian view of Catharsis to the following section, and confine ourselves here to a critical examination of these three ideas from the general psychological point of view.

Let us take the idea of emotional relief first.

First of all, what is an emotion? The majority of modern psychologists seem to be agreed to regard emotions as intimately connected with instincts. Whenever an emotion is stirred, there must be some corresponding instinct at work at the same time. For instance, when a man suddenly catches sight of a tiger at large, the imminent danger arouses his instinct of flight, and he experiences inwardly the emotion of fear. All emotions are accompanied by certain muscular and organic changes, such as the movement of the members, alteration in breathing, circulation and glandular secretion, etc.. These changes are usually called the «expressions» of emotions. They are the adaptations of the body to the modes of instinctive activity which are required by the situation. Thus in the case of fear, the instinctive activity of flight exhibits itself in swift locomotary movements and in certain changes in the visceral organs which render these movements the most effective. The awareness of these bodily changes undoubtedly affects the quality of an emotion; but it does not constitute, as James and Lange have thought, the sum total of that emotion; for over and above muscular and organic sensations, the subject is also aware of a conative element, «a persistent striving toward a goal with variation of means», as Prof. McDougall has put it. The emotion is then, again in McDougall's words, «an indicator of the instinctive impulse at work» (8).

Such is the general nature of emotions. What is then to be understood by «emotional relief»? Every instinct may be conceived as a store of potential energy; and when it is excited, this potential energy innervates its particular impulse and issues in various bodily activities. On the subjective side, the whole change, impulsive striving together with its adaptative bodily activities, is felt as an emotion. When we say that an emotion is «relieved», what is really meant is that the instinctive potential energy finds its proper outlet. Thus an emotional relief is nothing else than an emotional expression. An emotion may not always be expressed. An instinctive impulse is sometimes inhibited by a con-

trary impulse or arbitrarily repressed by social forces. For example a civilized man may not always express his grief in weeping or his joy in laughter. When an instinctive impulse is repressed, its potential energy is accumulated so as to exert a painful pressure on the mind. In more serious cases repression may cause mental disorders of all descriptions. But when the repressing forces are removed, the pent-up energy may overflow freely and find its proper outlet in various bodily activities. The result is a feeling of pleasure as it is a relief of tension.

«Emotional relief» understood in the sense of emotional expression is quite a legitimate notion and it has been generally acknowledged by poets and artists. The chorus in the «Medea» of Euripides sings:

> But all the darkness and the wrong,
> Quick deaths and dim heart-aching things
> Would no man ease them with a song
> Or music of a thousand strings? (9).

The author of the mediaeval romance «Aucassin et Nicolette» explains why he takes the trouble of telling the story in these words:

> Nus homme n'est si esbahis
> Tant dolans ni entrepris,
> De grand mal amaladis
> S'il l'oit ne soit garis
> Et de joie resbaudis
> Tant par est douce (10).

The same idea has been repeated again and again by modern poets. Spenser warns us against the danger of repressing emotion:

> Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak,
> Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break (11).

Wordsworth, on the other hand, speaks of the joy of emotional relief:

To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief:
And I again am strong (12).

Robert Burton confesses that he writes on melancholy in order to avoid melancholy. Keble speaks of «vis medica poetica»: «Here, no doubt, is one final cause of poetry: to innumerable persons it acts as a safety-volve tending to preserve them from mental disease» (13). Byron writes to the same effect: Poetry is «the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents the earth-quake. They say poets never or rarely go mad, ...but (they) are generally so near it that I cannot help thinking rhyme is so far useful in anticipating and preventing the disorder» (14). Similar utterances may be quoted from many other writers. But these are sufficient to show the prevalence of the idea of emotional relief among the poets. An idea so widely held must have some truth in it.

The examples just adduced are generally described as artistic expression. Now artistic expression is ultimately to be regarded as a kind of emotional expression just as weeping, laughing, trembling, blushing etc.. But there is in it a further factor than the mere overflow of pent-up energy: it is sympathy. Art not only expresses, but also communicates, the subjective feelings of the artist. Once communicated, these feelings are shared by the public, and such sympathetic response reacts on the feelings themselves. As the common saying goes: «A pleasure shared is a pleasure intensified, while a pain shared is a pain relieved». Artistic expression, like religious prayer and confession, has a double function; it is primarily a relief of burdened heart and secondarily an appeal for sympathy. The pleasure of the former is reinforced by the pleasure of the latter. An emotion, we may say, is doubly relieved when it is not only expressed but also shared.

Such is the nature of emotional relief. How far is it true, then, to say that Tragedy effects such an emotional relief? To arrive at a clear understanding of the problem, it is of supreme importance to bear in mind that pity and fear, like all other emo-

tions, are not things or entities which exist always in the mind. They are functions of the mind. They appear only when they are excited by certain objects. They do not exist either before, or after, the excitation. Before the excitation there are only certain instinctive dispositions which pre-dispose men to certain emotions when the occasion arises. Pity, for example, is only felt when one is confronted with a pitiable object, so is fear. These words, when used as verbs, are always transitive, and it is meaningless to say that we pity or fear when there is nothing to be pitied or feared.

It is now obvious that when we speak of Tragedy «effecting the Catharsis or Alleviating discharge of pity and fear», the pity and fear in question can only be the pity and fear excited on the occasion by the sight of tragic events; or more exactly, what is discharged is the potential energy of those instincts whose corresponding emotions are pity and fear. The emotions themselves are not discharged but expressed or simply felt. So Aristotle's famous saying reduces itself to this: Tragedy arouses pity and fear and thereby discharges the potential energy of the corresponding instincts of these emotions. In this sense the idea of Tragedy as a means of emotional relief is undoubtedly true. Tragedy, more than other forms of poetry, represents the most intense life of exceptional human beings at the most critical moment of their life. We are more «moved» by it than by any other form of art. It calls forth the maximum amount of our vital energy and gives it an ample outlet. It enables us to live for two or three hours of intense life which is denied to us in reality. It is a most exciting experience and therein lies the main source of our pleasure. In theatre, this aethetic pleasure is reinforced by the gratification of the gregarious instinct. Artistic expression, as we have said, is an appeal for sympathy. Sympathy exists not only between the artist and his spectators, but also among the spectators themselves. It is always a great pleasure to find others take pleasure in the same object as oneself. Half of the pleasure in theatrical performance is spoiled when one finds one's applauses un-echoed by

one's fellow-spectators. Imagine a most exciting tragedy performed before a single spectator in a large theatre. However well the actors may play their respective parts, the solitary spectator will have much regret in finding empty seats when he looks around for sympathetic glances and gestures. The average man goes to theatre not only to experience an emotional thrill, but also to experience it in communion with his fellow-beings. Emotional relief in Tragedy means, then, the relaxing of tension as a result of the emotions being both felt by oneself and shared with others.

So much about emotional relief in tragedy may be accepted by most psychologists. But commentators of Aristotle's «Poetics» generally mean more than this. They think somehow that the emotions of pity and fear exist as separate entities before the excitation of tragic objects; that they are «purged» or «purified» by the excitation and that they exist after the excitation still as separate entities but in a purer form than before. They compare pity and fear to peccant humours; they draw analogy between these emations and the peculiar mental disorder which the Greeks call «Enthusiasm». «Pity and fear», Butcher writes, «artificially stirred ,expel the latent pity and fear which we bring with us from real life, or at least such elements in them as are disquieting» (15). Now it is this notion of emotions as entities, as something which may be washed like dirty linen, which is fundamentally false. It is a remnant of the old «Faculty» Psychology which describes all dynamic mental processes as static entities or things. Emotions, from this point of view, may be purged of their painful or morbid elements by Tragedy. Let us now examine further this idea in the light of modern psychology.

The quality of an emotion is determined partly by innate dispositions and partly by the circumstances which have given rise to it. Take the factor of circumstances first. Emotions of the same category often vary with circumstances. For example, the fear which I felt yesterday before a tiger may not be exactly similar to the fear which I feel to-day at the idea that I might be infected

with influenza, though the instinctive dispositions are perhaps the same in both cases. My fear of today cannot be said as a modified form of my fear of yesterday. It is the same instinctive dispositions functioning in two different manners on two different occasions. The fear in Tragedy and the fear in actual life are even more disparate, as they are excited under totally different circumstances. One is characterized by aesthetic disinterestedness, whereas the other calls forth immediate practical responses. It is most unlikely that because I feel pity and fear today at a representation of «Othello» or «Phédre», my pity for a poor beggar or my fear of a snake will undergo any sensible change from its usual form to-morrow. The famous instances of Sylla and the tyrant of Phères given by Rousseau, (see Chapter III) prove that there is no necessary connection between the pity and fear in Tragedy and the pity and fear in actual life.

It may be maintained that when Aristotle's commentators speak of the emotions of pity and fear, they really mean the corresponding instinctive dispositions of these emotions, and that although pity and fear cannot be said to be «purged» of their painful or morbid element through excitation, their corresponding instinctive dispositions may be so purged. But even if allowances be made for looseness in psychological terminology, the idea of purgation as expulsion of the disturbing element, «namely the pain, which enters into pity and fear when aroused by real objects» (16) is still open to serious criticism. In the first place, pleasure and pain themselves are also not entities which exist always in the mind, but the feeling-tones of such mental activities as sensations, volitions and emotions. Their essence consists in being felt in consciousness. Innate dispositions, inasmuch as they are yet latent and below the threshold of consciousness, cannot be described as pleasurable or painful. The idea that pain is inherent in the instinctive dispositions of pity and fear is therefore to be discarded. Nor does it amend matter much to say that though pain does not exist before being felt, there may be yet a morbid or

pathological element in the instinctive dispositions of pity and fear which constitutes a latent cause of pain. Instinctive dispositions of all kinds are acquired for their biological utility through a long process of evolution. They are common to the whole human race with but slight variations; that is to say, they are quite normal mental equipments. If they assume a morbid form in certain individuals, such pathological cases are after all very rare and might be well ignored in a scientific definition of Tragedy. Tragedy, in ancient Greece as well as in modern Europe, is not a treatment for madmen and lunatics, but mainly a common amusement for normal men and women. It is extremely improbable that Aristotle, who laid so much stress on the distinction between the essential and the accidental, should have introduced into the definition of Tragedy a predicate which does not belong to every member of the class, (in this case, the audience of Tragedy).

In the secand place, it is held that the pity and fear of tragedy are purified because, excited by fictitious misfortunes, they are not mixed with pain. Now pity and fear, as we have shown again and again, are emotions with a mixed feeling-tone, they are both painful and pleasant. It is just such a mixed feeling-tone which characterizes them as pity and fear. If you take away the painful element of these emotions; what remain will not be pity and fear but some entirely different emotions. An entirely painless pity or fear is almost unthinkable, as pity necessarily contains a sense of regret and fear a sense of danger.

The idea of tragic purgation as a complete removal or quantitative reduction of pity and fear is associated with the great names of Milton, Lessing and others. Although it avoids the difficulty of assuming a painless pity or fear, it is hardly more acceptable. Instincts and emotions are inherited from our primitive ancestors, they have undergone but little change through all the ages. Are we to suppose that they are likely to be completely removed or partially mitigated because they have been excited for two or three hours by fictitious events in theatre? Moreover, it is gene-

rally acknowledged that practice makes perfection and constant exercise of a function leads to its development and increase in strength. There is no reason to think that pity and fear are exceptions. These emotions, as Mr. Carritt has remarked very well, are not «deposits of which the more we spend the less we have, but rather, as Plato knew, faculties which are strengthend by exercise; we should not fortify a man against a night-watch with a dismal treatise, nor steel him against pity with a tale of tears» (17).

III.

Attempts have often been made to explain tragic Catharsis in the light of Freudian Psychology. Prof. Prescott in his book on «The Poetic Mind», which is a study of poetic creation and appreciation based on the Freudian doctrine of the unconscious wish, regards «Catharsis» as a function not only of Tragedy, but of poetry in general. «Accompanying the fiction», he wreites, «is the actuality of emotions, and behind all, the fundamental desires. The poetic passion is at best a disturbance of the ordinary tenor of mind; when it arises from strong feelings under repression,, it becomes the poetic madness — a condition threatening the peace of mind, which is allayed by the poetic Catharsis» (18). M. Baudouin is of the same opinion. «La psychanalyse», he says, «apporte une confirmation éclatante et imprévue à une idée qu'à formulée il y a bien longtemps Aristote, l'idée de catharsis» (19). Even Prof. Dixon, who does not seem to be an ardent supporter of the Freudian doctrine, admits the idea of Catharsis to be of interest to us «since something of modern psycholoy, which dwells upon the danger of repressed desires, is here anticipated» (20).

There are certain circumstances which seem to lend support to a rapprochement between the Aristotelian doctrine of Catharsis and Freudian Psychology. In the first place, there is much in the writings of Weil, Bernays and their followers which bears

some striking resemblances to the Freudian idea of art as sublimation of unconscious wishes. The notion of repression seems to be forestalled by the emphasis laid on the necessity of giving vent to emotions and by the recognition of the fact that accumulated emotions, like peccant humours, are liable to cause mental disorders. Catharsis is admitted to be «a pathological effect on the soul analogous to the effect of medicine on the body». It is an «alleviating discharge» of pent-up emotions which restores the mental equilibrium. All these ideas are obviously in keeping with the Freudian thought. Secondly, Freud himself often describes his special method of probing the depth of the unconscious as a «Cathartic treatment». It was the discovery of this «Cathartic treatment» which launched the psychoanalytic movement. Freud is never tired of telling the old story of how a girl suffering from hysteria was cured by his colleague, Dr. Breuer, when she recovered her lost memory and lived through the pathogenic scenes once again without trying to suppress the emotions. Freud explained this case by «the theory of catharsis». «According to that hypothesis», he says, «hysterical symptoms originate through the energy of mental process being withheld from conscious influence and being diverted into bodily innervation («conversion»). A hysterical sympton would thus be a substitute for an omitted mental act and a reminiscence of the occasion which should have given rise to that act. And, on this view, recovery would be a result of the liberation of the affect that had gone astray and of its discharge along a normal path («Abreaction»)» (21). What Freud has called «the liberation and discharge of affect» is obviously analogous to what Bernays has called «the alleviating discharge of pity and fear». Judging from his use of the term «Cathartic treatment» before he has definitely adopted the word «Psychoanalysis», and from his fondness of using certain characters in Greek myths and tragedies such as «Oedipus», «Electra», «Prometheus» etc. to symbolize certain «complexes», we my venture to suggest that Freud probably owes much of his psychological doctrines to the

discussion of Catharsis in Tragedy which had been much in the air long before be began to write.

It is not for us here to discuss the Freudian Psychology in general, but only to examine how far certain writers like Prescott, Baudouin and others are justified to read a Freudian sense into the word «Catharsis» as used by Aristotle. For the sake of clearness, we shall keep separate two distinctive phases of the problem; first, the object which undergoes the cathartic effect; sesondly, the way in which the cathartic effect is brought about.

With regard to the object which undergoes the cathartic effect, a clear distinction should be made between the emotions represented in Tragedy and the emotions excited by it. This distinction, as we have seen in the opening section of the present Chapter, was long ago pointed out by Lessing. The emotions represented in Tragedy are those felt by the tragic characters themselves, whereas the emotions excited by Tragedy are those felt by the spectators. It is true that the spectators may participate sympathetically in the emotions of the characters; but over and above these, they feel also certain emotions of a distinctly aesthetic order, which, in Tragedy, we have shown to be pity and fear. For example, jealousy and remorse are the emotions represented in the tragedy of «Othello», but your pity and fear for the fate of the hero and the heroine are emotions which result from the sight of the tragedy. Now as almost all modern scholars are agreed, the emotions which undergo the cathartic effect in Tragedy are pity and fear and not the emotions represented such as love, jealousy, ambition etc.. But when the Freudians speak of Catharsis or sublimation, what they have in view are not the emotions excited but the emotions represented. They have employed the «Oediqus complex» as a master-key and tried it at every tragedy. Everywhere they would discover and incestuous wish of the son for the mother and his hatred and jealousy for the father. The father is sometimes disguised as a tyrant as in «Prometheus Bound» where the stolen fire is said to represent sexual power. (K. Abraham:

«Dreams and Myths»). So it is the case with Schiller's «Don Carlos »and «Guillaume Tell». (Otto Rrank: «The Incest Motif in Poetry and Legend». Sometimes the rivalry between father and son is replaced by the rivalry between two brothers as in the «Britannicus» of Racine and the «Bride of Messina» of Schiller. (Otto Rank), in the latter case the mother is also replaced by a sister. Earnest Jones in his essay on «The Problem of Hamlet and the Oedipus complex» has made an elaborate psychoanalytic study of Shakespeare's famous masterpiece. The Oedipus complex is said to be represented both by Claudius and by Hamlet. Claudius killed his brother (who was really the father disguised) and married the latter's widow (who was really the mother disguised). So he had his wish fulfilled in a circuitous manner. His success aroused the Oedipus complex in the bosom of young Hamlet who loved his mother and so hated Claudius (who now in turn become the father in disguise). Both father and son may be decomposed and represented by several persons. Thus the Father in «Hamlet» is first represented by the Old Hamlet, then by Claudius, and finally by Polonius, who had certain paternal traits such as worldly wisdom, self-confidence, the fondness of giving advices, etc.. All three were sacrified to fulfill a hiddent wish. The Son is not only represented by Hamlet but also by Laertes and Fontinbras. Unlike Hamlet, Leartes and Fontinbras were not paralysed by inhibitions.

We do not pretend to understand all about these fantastic theories, but one thing about them is clear enough: they all start from the same general principle that Tragedy, like dreams, represents a circuitous way of fulfilling our unconscious wish. The Oedipus complex weighs heavy in the bosom of us all, Tragedy liberates and discharges the energy that is attached to it, the «libido», as the Freudians generally call it. Thus in the death of Claudius and Polonius, it is not only Hamlet who has his wish fulfilled, we too have our share of satisfaction, for these figures symbolize the Father for us as well as for Hamlet. What appears

to our consciousness as a calamity is really a happy ending for our unconscious mind. Now it may be pointed out that catharsis in this sense, i.e. in the sense of the liberation and discharge of «Libido» is certainly not what Aristotle and his commentators have meant, for they have definitely regarded pity and fear as the object of Catharsis.

The way in which Catharsis is brought about, as conceived by the Freudins, is another factor to be considered. In the first place, there is the idea of repression. What is liberated in the Cathartic process has been repressed. There would be no need for Catharsis, if there had been no repression. Repression does not simply mean that certain instincts and emotions are denied their free expression; it means that a «wish», an idea together with its «affect», is detached from consciousness and hidden away in the unconscious. Catharsis in the Freudian sense means essentially the discharge of an emotional or instinctive force, i.e. the «affect», which has been repressed with some unbearable idea to which it is attached. Secondly there is also the idea of displacement or disguise. Just as the pathogenic idea has been repressed by conscious influences, so it cannot reappear in its original shape. It has to assume a disguised or symbolic form in order to evade the vigilant «censor». Thus Tragedy is often a disguised form of a repressed wish. «Hamlet» for example is only a «manifest content» while its «latent meaning» is the Oedipus complex, the incestuous love for one's mother and the jealousy for one's father. As these primitive tendencies are incompatible with morality and religion, they are repressed and kept in the abyss of the unconscious. But the «affect» wich is attached to these tendencies is now displaced on the story of Hamlet which is quite harmless from the moral point of view, and which serves as a convenient substitute for the original repressed ideas. In this roundabout way, it finds its outlet through a different channel. Tragic Catharsis understood in this sense would be the liberation and discharge of the «affect» of a repressed idea through the displacement of that

«affect» on a different but harmless idea. Now both these two ieas, repression and displacement, are justly claimed by the Freudians as their most original contributions. They cannot be attributed to either Aristotle or to his commentators.

Thus the Freudian doctrine of Catharsis has a quite technical sense of its own; it bears no further resemblance to the Aristotelian idea of tragic Catharsis than the general principles that emotions must not be arbitrarily suppressed and that a reasonable indulgence in them is good for mental health. Now these general principles are peculiar neither to Aristotle nor to the Freudians; they have been so widely accepted that they sound almost like truisms. It is now obvious that those writers who try to read a Freudian sense into the word «Catharsis» as used by Aristotle are hardly justified.

So far we have not yet discussed whether the Freudian theory of Catharsis as applied to tragedy is satisfactory by itself. The originality of this theory, as we have seen, lies mainly in the ideas of repression and displacement. They both originated from the study of neuroses. Applied to neurotic cases they are perhaps useful working hypotheses. But neurotic cases are rare; and Freud, in applying to human race in general, a theory which was originally meant to explain only certain pathological symptoms, has pratically made lunatics of us all. He seems to mean that humanity suffers collectively from a hidden mental disorder, an original sin which weighs the heavier on us, the more civilization advances. Such a pessimistic idea will never be accepted by common sense. But it may be argued that scientific truth and common sense do not always accord well with each other. So some weightier arguments must be brought if the Freudian doctrine is to be refuted. It lies beyond our scope to criticize the whole Freudian system, fortunately this has been admirably done by M. Janet in his «Médications psychologiques», by Prof. McDougall in his «Outlines of Abnormal Psychology »and by many other eminent psychologists. Here we shall raise just one objection which has

not been raised by previous critics of Freud and which is particularly important to the problem of tragic pleasure.

The unconscious is conceived by Freud as an independent entity or personality in every respect on the analogy of the conscious life. It has «wishes», it can weave all sorts of fantasies, and it often feels uncomfortable in its dark prison and seizes every opportunity to make a stealthy excursion into the forbidden realm of consciousness. Thus the unconscious can exercise all the three fundmental functions of conscious mind: cognition, conation and feeling. It never remains idle, but exercises these fonctions all the while. The vital energy attached to the instinctive dispositions is thus constantly set free in innervating unconscious impulses. Such a liberation of vital energy is in itself a relief, and there is no reason to suppose that such a relief is not accompanied by a pleasurable feeling-tone — pleasurable of course only to the unconscious mind. The idea of an unconscious pleasure is no more absurd than that of an unconscious idea or unconscious wish. Now the fundamentl difficulty of the Freudian Psychology lies, we think, in the implication that a wish is fulfilled in the unconscious, but the pleasure of its fulfillment is felt in consciousness. To confine ourselves to Tragedy, you say that all tragedies originate from the Oedipus complex and fulfill our unconscious incestuous wish. Let it be granted. But such a fulfillment obviously can only take place in the unconscious, for the plain man who enjoys the tragedy of «Oedipus» or «Hamlet» is never aware of any gratification of an incestuous wish. This the Freudians will perhaps gladly admit. But the plain man does feel an intense pleasure at the sight of a good tragedy, that is to say, though he is unconscious of having fulfilled a wish, he is conscious of the pleasure of its fulfillment. Now it may be well asked: why should the unconscious take all the trouble and leave all the benifit to consciousness? In ordinary language, the fulfillment of a wish means gratification or satisfaction, and gratification or satisfaction means experiencing a certain kind of pleasure. It would be strange to say that

a wish is fulfilled but the subject (in this case the unconscious personality) is not satisfied. But that is just what the Freudian doctrine amounts to saying.

When the plain man introspects his conscious experience at the contemplation of tragedy, he will find that he is pleased or satisfied. If he searches further for the cause of his pleasure, he will find primarily that he is pleased because he has lived through a most exciting moment, which means in the psychological language that tragic pleasure is the pleasure of emotional relief. He will find also that he is satisfied with the artistic qualities of the piece, its beautiful images and music, its skillful unfolding of the plot, its careful delineation of characters and the profound truth in its whole conception. This formal aspect of art has been entirely ignored by the Freudians. They do not see that poetry is more than incoherent dreams or wayward fantasies, and that though the nature of the unconscious demands that a wish should be symbolically expressed, it by no means demands that it should be beautifully expressed as well. They leave no «distance» between art and life. The enjoyment of Tragedy is just like eating, drinking or marrying, the satisfaction of a practical want. If it is pushed to its logical consequence, the Freudian Psychology would exclude all aesthetic experiences from human life. Art in all its forms, however noble and sublime it may be, would be nothing more than a means for gratifying our baser instincts. Such a view of art is at least one-sided and exaggerated, if not entirely false.

To sum up, the word «Catharsis» cannot be understood in the sense of the fulfillment of an unconscious wish. The simpler and truer view is that it simply means an emotional relief — a notion, though implied in, but not peculiar to, the Freudian theory. The emotions affected by Catharsis are pity and fear, emotions excited by, but not necessarily represented in, Tragedy. Both pity and fear contain pain as their essential ingredient. But this painful element is not, as most of Aristotle's commentators have suggested, purged away or diminished in strength so that after

Catharsis pity and fear will assume a purer form when excited in actual life; for, in the first place, the pity and fear of Tragedy and the pity and fear of actual life belong to two different orders of experience ;and secondly, instinctive dispositions are not so easily modified as the theory of purgation would imply. With the majority of human beings, pity and fear cannot be said to have necessarily something morbid in them. So Catharsis in Tragedy cannot be taken in its strict pathological sense. If Aristotle had meant it to be anything more than a simple emotional relief, then it can only be said that he was certainly mistaken.

CHAPTER XI.

TRAGEDY AND THE FEELING OF VITALITY.

I.

Before proceeding further in our enquiry, we may pause for a while to survey the ground which we have covered in the two preceding chapters. Starting from the general Hormic theory that pleasure results from unimpeded activity, we have come to the conclusion that even pain itself may be a source of pleasure, if it finds its free expression either in bodily activities or in some forms of art. We have shown that a part of tragic pleasure is the pleasure converted from pain through expression. «Expression» we have found to be synonymus with «relief», and what Aristotle has called «Catharsis» is nothing more than emotional relief. What Tragedy arouses and thereby relieves are the emotions of pity and fear understood in the sense given in Chapter V. These emotions according to our analysis, are each accompanied with a mixed feeling-tone: there is a positive pleasure, and there is also a painful element which, when felt and expressed, gives rise to

a pleasure of relief and swells the current of the positive pleasure which is caused by tragic pity and fear and by art.

Now such a view may be described as «vitalistic». Life is conceived as its own cause and as its own goal. It is its own cause, for regarded in its static aspect, it is force ,energy, «drive», the «will-to-live», «élan vital», or «libido» as it has been baptised by various writers; it is this force which impels life to move on. Life is also its own goal, for regarded in its dynamic aspect, it consists in the ever-going and ever-changing act of realizing itself in willing, striving, doing, moving and all kinds of activities. The force in life urges all living beings toward the same goal of maintaining life. Life is realized in activities and the goal of life is its own self-realization in activities. Feelng is an indicator of the success or failure of life's effort in realizing itself in activities: pleasure results when that effort is unimpeded, pain results when it is thwarted.

There is nothing new in this view. It has been repeated in various forms by scholars of all ages from Aristotle to Bergson, Driesch and McDougall. As it is all-embracing, so it is vague. As applied to Tragedy, it has given rise to numerous theories, which, though all based on the same vitalistic principle, emphasize each some particular aspect, and come to quite different conclusions. In the present Chpter we propose to examine some of these theories and try to obtain a more precise notion of the feeling of vitality in the enjoyment of Tragedy.

We shall start with the simplest view of all, that af Abbé Dubos: «L'âme a ses besoins comme le corps», writes the author of «Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et la Peinture», «et l'un des plus grands besoins est celui d'avoir l'esprit occupé. C'est ce besoin d'occupation qui fait comprendre que les hommes se plaisent aux passions, et qu'ils souffrent encore plus à vivre sans passions que les passions ne les font souffrir» (1). Nothing is so disagreable to the mind as the languid state of indolence into which it falls when it is not occupied with anything.

To get rid of this painful situation, the mind seeks all kinds of amusement and pursuit: play, gaming, shows and even executions. Any occupation of the mind, even when it is of a painful nature, is better than the state of listlessness and languor. Tragedy gives pleasure because it satisfies the need of occupation.

Obviously there is much truth in this theory of occupation. To the popular mind, Tragedy, like comedy or a football match, is simply a kind of pastime or amusement in which the goodly citizens eagerly indulge themselves when they have nothing to do and feel bored. Marston in his Prologue to «Antonio»s Revenge» expresses a similar view:

> The rawish dank of clumsy winter ramps
> The fluent summer's vein; and drizzling sleet
> Chilleth the wan bleak cheek of the numb'd earth,
> Whilst snarling gusts nibble the juiceless leaves
> From the nak'd, shudd'ring branch; and pills the skin
> From off the soft and delicate aspects.
> O now, methinks, a sullen, tragic scene
> Would suit the time with pleasing congruence.

It may be also pointed out that the theory of occupation anticipates the play theory of art. As Schiller and Spencer have held, art, like play, is the expression of surplus energy. It is a sign of the over-abundance of life. There is a need for occupation as there is a need for giving vent to surplus energy. Occupation may take the form of either work or play or art.

But the theory of occupation, though it is true, is never-theless inadequate. In the first place, it neglects the fact that men go to the theatre, not only when they have nothing to do, but more often when they have done too much work and want a change. The play-goers do not always belong to the so-called «leisured class». In our modern time, theatres flourish generally in industrial and commercial centres where the men and women who occupy most of the seats in the galleries are hard workers. For them play is not only an occupation or dissipation but a diversion. They

have had too much of one sort of experience and are longing for something different. This point has been well stressed by Schlegel. «The great bulk of mankind», says he, «merely from their situation in life, or from their incapacity for extraordinary exertions, are confined within a narrow circle of insignificant operations. Their days flow on in succession under the sleepy rule of custom, their life advances by an insensible progress, and the bursting torrent of the first passions of youth soon settles in a stagnant marsh. From the discontent which this occasions they are compelled to have recourse to all sorts of diversions, which uniformly consists in a species of occupation that may be renounced at pleasure, and though a struggle with difficulties, yet with difficulties that are easily surmounted. But of all diversions the theatre is undoubtedly the most entertaining. Here we may see others act even when we cannot act to any great purpose ourselves» (2). Tragedy, in a word, transports us from the actual world of ordinary experiences to an ideal world of great actions and strong passions, and thus cures us of the nausea of sordidness and mediocrity which our daily routine constantly produces in us.

Another defect of the theory of occupation lies in that it does not explain why among so many forms of occupation men should prefer particularly that of reading or seeing tragedies; i.e. why tragic objects should please us even more than objects which are pleasant in themselves. An explanation has been given by Prof. Cavin Thomas. «There is a kind of pleasure», he says, «which consists in the mere putting forth of energy, in the mere exercise of the faculties. Such exercise seems to be a part of that instinctive love of life which is a biological necessity». For this pleasure we do not always go to pleasant things. «On the contrary, we are apt to prefer things that are painful, gruesome and dangerous; for these give the greater shock, the more of that emotional excitement which is life». He then goes on to explain why Tragedy is generally concerned with death. «For our remote forebears, as

death was the greatest disaster, the supreme object of dread, so it was the most powerful of magnets for the imagination» (3). The origin of tragic pleasure is thus essentially biological.

But this biological explanation leaves out the important distinction between art and reality. Though death is «the most powerful of magnets for imagination», it does not give the same amount of pleasure in actual life as on the stage. Even when actual death or suffering does give pleasure, the nature of that pleasure is not the same as the pleasure in the sight of death or suffering as represented in tragedy. It is quite certain that there is in the tragic pleasure an element which may be described as «the pleasure in the mere putting forth of energy», but so it may be said of the delight in gladiatorial shows, public executions, bull- fight, sensational news such as fire, earthquake, shipwreck, divorce, murder etc.. These things have pleased men not so much because of any deep-rooted cruelty and malignity in human nature, as Taine and Faguet have thought, as because of the strong stimulus they give to man's vital energy .Tragedy does this also, but it does more than this. It is the highest form of art, whereas those sensational events just mentioned are not art at all. The problem of tragic pleasure is not solved by simply saying that it is «a pleasure in the mere putting forth of energy». Aesthetic pleasure has also to be taken into account.

II.

M. J. A. Richards has recently expounded a theory which is essentially vitallistic like those of Dubos and Calvin Thomas, but which is based on a new interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of Catharsis. In his view the main fundtion of art is the liberation of the geatest possible number of impulses in one organized experience. Our natural impulses are often opposed to one another. They may be organized in two ways. In our practical life, they are generally organized by exclusion: we follow some

one interest, see things from some one stand-point, and give vent to only one set of impulses; while other aspects of things which do not interest us for the moment are ignored ,and other impulses which do not serve our present interest are inhibited or suppressed. But in artistic experience, we cease to be oriented in any one definite direction, all conflict is reconciled and various impulses, however opposed to one another, are kept in a balanced poise. «The equilibrium of opposed impulses», he writes in «The Principles of Literary criticism», «which we suspect to be the ground plan of the most valuable aesthetic responses, brings into play far more of our personality than is possible in experiences of a more defined emotion». A new meaning is given to the «disinterestedness» which is generally associated with aesthetic contemplation. To be disinterested is «to respond, not through one narrow channel of interest, but simultaneously and coherently through many» (4).

Such is the general nature of aesthetic experience and it is best exemplified, according to Mr. Richards, by tragedy. «What clearer instance», he says, «of the 'balance or reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities' can be found than in Tragedy? Pity, the impulse to approach, and terror, the impulse to retreat, are brought in Tragedy to a reconciliation which they find nowhere else, and with them who knows what other allied groups of equally discordant impulses. Their union in an ordered single response is the Catharsis by which Tragedy is recognised». He points further that in the full tragic experience there is no suppression. The mind does not shy away from anything. «Suppressions and sublimations alike are devices by which we endeavour to avoid issues that might bewilder us. The essence of Tragedy is that it forces us to live for a moment without them. . . . .The joy which is so strangely the heart of the experience is not an indication that 'all's right wth the world' or that 'somewhere, somehow there is Justice'; it is an indication that all is right here and now in the nervous system». «Tragedy is perhaps the most general, all-accepting, all-ordering experience known».

We have no objection to this theory if it is understood in the general sense that Tragedy enables us to live for a moment a life richer and intenser than what is allowed us in reality; and that the richer and intenser life is, the greater will be the pleasure it yields. But the mechanical neatness with which Mr. Richards arrays our opposed impulses in a «balanced poise» may arouse suspicion. One also feels that the ghost of Hegel seems to have been resurrected in an unexpected quarter. «Reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities», what a power mere phrases have over the mind of man! The description of tragic experience as given by Mr. Richards seems somewhat odd to the average play-goers. For us the supposed simultaneous and yet coherent functioning of the impulse to approach and the impulse to retreat seems to lie beyond the ability even of a most skillful acrobat. If pushed to its logical consequence, the theory of balanced poise would imply that Tragedy *suspends* impulses rather than affords them an equal opportunity for expression and relief. The ideal aesthetic attitude would be a hesitating attitude in which opposed impulses are paralyzed rather than poised. Besides Mr. Richards simplifies too much the working of human mind. There is much more than a mere impulse to approach in pity and a mere impulse to retreat in fear. As tragic pity and fear are aesthetic emotions and involve no practical attitude, these impulses are the least important part in their constitution. To describe «pity and fear» as «opposed» and «discordant» emotions is another objectionable point. These emotions, different as they are, may often coexist even in our practical life. You pity a mother nursing her sick child, you fear with her for the worst. Would Mr. Richards say that here we have a typical tragic experience, as the impulse to approach and the impulse to retreat are balanced in one organized experience?

Mr. Richards' «Principles of Literary Criticism» appeared (1924) many years after Miss Puffer's «Psychology of Beauty» (1905). It is a pity that Mr. Richards should have ignored a theory of his predecessor which is somewhat similar to his own, but

in which the difficulty of postulating simultaneous functioning of opposed impulses is avoided. Instead of «balance of impulses», she speaks of «balance of emotions». A spectator at the theatre differs from a man in the practical world. He is «completely cut off from all possibilities of influence on events», and «he cannot take an attitude»; «since he may not act, even those beginnings of action which make the basis of emotion are inhibited in him». He follows, however, the action on the stage by instinctive imitation. «The expression which he imitates brings up in him to a certain extent the whole complex of ideas and feeling-tones belonging to that expression». It may be asked: are not the organic reactions associated with these ideas and feeling-tones aroused in us as well? As a student of Münsterberg, Miss Puffer lays great stress on the rôle of muscular sensation. Münsterberg, we remember, holds that in aesthetic contemplation as the object is «isolated» and no action required, the impulses are innervated as a result of sympathetic imitation, but not discharged in bodily activities. These innervated but undischarged impulses are felt as a tension or a sense of effort. Miss Puffer applies this view to the enjoyment of drama. Dramatic personages are often in conflict. Othello menaces, Desdemona shrinks. The spectator cannot menace and shrink at once. The two opposed impulses thus neutralize each other, and «the mutual checking of impulses issues in a balance, a tension, a conflict which is yet a bond». The tragic experience, like aesthetic experience in general, is «the union of a kind of stimulation or enhanced life, with repose; a heightening of the vital energies unaccompanied by any tendency to movement». The dramatic essential is «not action, but tension», and it is tension which accounts for the excitement or exaltation in the contemplation of Tragedy (5).

Miss Puffer did not mention Lipps, but the influence of the theory of empathy on her view is obvious. Lipps himself has a theory of Tragedy which is based on his general theory of empathy. He, too, regards the sense of activity as the source of aesthe-

tic pleasure in general and of tragic pleasure in particular. «It is clear», Lipps speaks of aesthetic pleasure in general, «that I feel myself, among other things, striving or willing, bestirring myself, or taking pains, and, in such striving or contriving, I feel myself meeting or overcoming obstacles, or perhaps yielding to them. I feel myself attaining a goal, satisfying my striving and my will, I feel my efforts successful. In a word I feel various activities. And therein I feel myself strong, light, sure, resilient, perhaps proud and the like. Some such manner of feeling myself is always the ground of aesthetic satisfaction» (6). Applying this to Tragedy, he says, «it is not Faust's despair but my sympathy with it that pleases me». «Sympathy» for Lipps is the aesthetic imitation or paricipation of the activities and emotions of the hero. In sympathizing with the hero, we are lifted up out of ourselves. There is a pleasure in this «escape from self», as it is accompanied with a self-expansion, a widening of the sphere of activities, and a sense of effort or being active (7).

It cannot be denied that empathy is an important factor in the enjoyment of Tragedy. We do often feel the tension or sense of effort as described by Lipps and Puffer. But the theory of Empathy does not cover all the facts. In the first place, as Müller Freienfels has shown (see Chapter IV), Empathy takes place only with a certain type of spectators, the so-called «participant» type; whereas with the «contemplator» type, sympathetic imitation hardly occurs at all. The spectators of the latter type are distinctly aware that they are only in a theatre and that the actions and emotions represented on the stage are fictitious. Yet they can enjoy a good tragedy in their own cold-blooded way. Thus the sense of effort in sympathetic imitation cannot be regarded as the main source of tragic pleasure. Secondly, the theory of Empathy implies that the emotions in the tragic experience are those which are sympathetically imitated from the characters. But as we have shown in the preceding chapter, there are certain emotions which are aroused in the spectators by the spectacle and which the cha-

racters do not necessarily feel themselves. These emotions we have followed Aristotle to identify with pity and fear. Miss Puffer speaks of «the tension of conflict» as «the alleviation of the true Catharsis». She ignores that Catharsis affects mainly the emotions of pity and fear and not the emotions represented in a tragedy such as love, hatred, jealousy, ambition etc.. In her discussion of tragic emotions, she tries all the while to elucidate the Aristotelian doctrine of Catharsis, but she leaves out all reference to pity and fear. Thus she evades the main issue of the problem.

III.

One other suggestion vitalistic in tendency deserves mention. Vital energy discharges itself not only in emotions but also in intellectual effort .The pleasure in Tragedy may be due, not so much to the mysterious Catharsis of pity and fear, as to the satisfaction of our curiosity — our curiosiy to know ever more of life and experience. This idea again traces its origin to Aristotle. «It is natural for all», says he, «to delight in works of imitation. The truth .... is shown by experience: though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representation of them in art, the forms, for example, of the lowest animals and of dead bodies. The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures. ....The reason of the delight in seeing the picture is that one is at the same time learning — gathering the meaning of things, e. g. that man there is so-and-so» (8).

The intellectual source of tragic pleasure has been emphasized by Mr. F. L. Lucas in his recent book on «Tragedy», though he does not acknowledge the influence of Aristotle. «Curiosity», he writes, «the first intellectual emotion of the child, the last of the old man — that is the ultimate base of epic and novel and Tragedy alike». Man is always craving for more life and experience. The ordinary actual world is too narrow for our enter-

prises and adventures. Our lives are too dull, brief in duration and confined in scope. Tragedy offers us some compensation for life's shortcomings. «'Life piled on life were all too little', but at least this imaginary world is there to redress the balance of the real». «Tragedy, then, is», writes Mr. Lucas in the way of definition, «a representation of human unhappiness which pleases us not-with-standing, by the truth with which it is seen and the skill with which it is communicated» (9).

The intellectual element in tragic pleasure has been generally left out of account by most writers perhaps on the ground of its obviousness. Mr. Lucas is to be thanked for having reminded us of its importance. Curiosity is perhaps playing an increasingly greater part with us modern sophisticated play-goers who often book the seats for some classical pieces not so much for the pleasure of a mere emotional excitement as for taking a «demonstration» lesson in dramatic literature. We follow eagerly the development of the plot, we analyse the drawing of characters, we critize the diction and versification of the piece, we ask ourselves whether the scenery effect is in keeping with the dramatic atmosphere, we compare the Duse with Sarah Bernhardt in the rôle of Phédre, we think of the different interpretations of certain passages, we wonder whether the authors mean to have a moral in the play, in a word, we are engaged with a thousand intellectual considerations which would wipe away all traces of emotions from the table. Of couse a citical attitude of this kind often spoils the effect of a good tragedy if it is carried too far. But it is always present to a greater or less extent in the mind of most spectators. Even the unsophisticated gallery-standers are often held in breathless expectancy by what is usually called the «Plot-interest». Perhaps with the type of spectators whom Müller Freienfels designates as «contemplators», the pleasure in Tragedy is mainly intellectual. They stand aloof unmoved by the whirl-pool of passions which carries away their more naîve and sentimental fellow-spectators of the «participant» type. What Diderot has said about the

self-possession of actors may apply to them as well. Tears and sighs are for them beautiful images and artistic symbols, not mere stimulant for sympathetic responses. They can see a tragedy as an organic whole and notice the interrelations of the different parts. A slight fluctuation of the voice, a negligible variance in the interpretation of a certain word or phrase, or a subtle revelation of the poet's mind in some casual remarks of the characters will not escape their notice. Tragedy is treasured by them for its surpassing beauty and for its profound truth. It can hardly be maintained that spectators of this more detached type rank below those of the opposite type in artistic taste. So in a full account of the tragic experience intellectual satisfaction should never be left out.

But like the Empathy theory, the curiosity theory tends to envisage only one type of the spectators and ignore the rest. It is true, but it is incomplete an inadequate. The purely intellectual attitude is after all a sophisticated one. The majority of spectators do not go to see «Hamlet» with a mind over-burdned with Aristotle's «Poetics», Coleridge's Lectures and notions of versification and dramatic rules. They go there mainly for a good excitement, for an emotional thrill. They live through an intense life for an hour or two and they leave their seats well satisfied. They too are to be accounted for in a theory of Tragedy. Perhaps an ideal spectator would combine the qualities of both the «participant» and the «contemplator» type. He would neither identify himself with the characters to the extent that he completely forgets himself and fails to see the piece as a work of art; nor would he carry his detached critical attitude so far as to remain unmoved to pity and fear and to be unable to have a first-hand intuitive knowledge of the emotions represented. He would enjoy a good tragedy both intellectually and emotionally. Spectators of the pure «participant» or the pure «contemplator» type are equally rare. The mojority of men and women stand in varying distances between the two extremes. So the theory of empathy and the theory

of intellectual curiosity are complementary rather than antagonistic to each other.

IV.

There is a serious defect common to all the vitalistic theories of Tragediy which we have just discussed. What the writers have said about occupation, the mere putting forth of energy, balance of impulses or emotions, Empathy and curiosity, apply equally well, not only to all aesthetic experiences, but to non-aesthetic activities such as ordinary attentive act or perception. They all have failed to define the specific nature of tragic pleasure as distinguished from the pleasure resulting from other kinds of activities. You look at the Parthenon or at a Greek vase, for example, the balance and symmetry of the work of art will so affect you that in your muscular responses there is also a kind of balance and symmetry. You feel the same degree of tension on your right and on your left. This is what Mr. Richards has called «a balance of impulses». Again, even in such simple aesthetic experience as looking at a vase there is an empathetic activity and a sense of effort, as it has been well shown by Vernon Lee and Thomson in their book on «Beauty and Ugliness». Mr. Richards himself admits that the balanced poise of impulses is not peculiar to Tragedy. «It can be given by a carpet or a pot or by a gesture». But surely the experience of looking at a carpet or a vase differs very much from that of seeing a tragedy. It is incumbent on writers on tragic pleasure to find out wherein the difference lies.

Tragedy, it should be noticed, does not merely please us, it uplifts us to a higher level of vitality, it gives us a «singular swing towards elevation» as Schopenhauer has put it. In Tragedy we feel a sense of triumph before a spectacle of defeat. But that defeat is the consequence of a strenuous struggle and not the surrender of a coward. Strictly speaking, Schopenhauer's statement that «the representation of a great misfortune is *alone* essential to Tragey» is not true. Not all great misfortunes awaken in us a

sense of the tragic. Earthquake and ship-wreck do not make their victims tragic heroes. In the tragedy of «Macbeth», both Macbeth and Duncan are victims of a great misfortune, and that which falls on Duncan may be said to be even greater than that which falls on Macbeth, as he is an innocent sufferer. The same thing may be said of Banquo. But this does not make either Duncan or Banquo a greater tragic figure than Macbeth. In the same way Britannicus in Racine's Tragedy of that name can hardly be regarded as a tragic hero as his Oreste or Mithridate is. All these instances show that for a great tragedy something more than the mere representation of a great misfortune is needed. What is it? The question has been very well answered by Mr. J. S. Smart. «There is not actual tragedy», he says, «if such suffering falls upon a person of weak nature, who accepts it with mere wretched submissiveness. It is present only when there is something of greatness and struggle in him, even if it should be only a momentary energy or inspiration of feeling and expression, carrying him beyond and above himself. Tragedy involves reaction against calamity. The character who has been caught in the fatal snare struggles to escape, seeks to break through the net which is gathering about him; or if effort is unvailing, there is a reaction in the mind itself» (10).

Thus it is not only a great misfortune, but the way of facing it, that is essential to Tragedy. There is no tragedy where there is no reaction against calamity. What pleases us is not the calamity but the reaction. There is a divine spark in all of us which forbids us to accept defeat and induces us to love adventures. Garibaldi in his famous appeal to the Italian Army did not promise a glorious victory and rich spoils, but said instead: «Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger, come with me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions. I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death». He was a profound psychologist and his appeal went to heart. In Tragedy we witness such battles and death as Garibaldi offered to his soldiers,

but the combatants are not men with their fellow-beings, but men with the divine forces themselves. It is true that in that struggle man fights against odds and is always the loser. But what does that mater? Leonidas and his Spartans did not prevent the Persians from passing the Gates of Thermopylae, buth their heroic death is not less revered by us on that account. Their moral strength triumphed, though their physical force is defeated. In all great tragic struggles the physical defeat is generally more than compensated by the moral triumph. «Death itself», says Prof. Allardyce Nicoll, «has ceased to be of moment. .... Tragedy assumes that death is inevitable and that its time of coming is of no importance compared with what a man does before his death» (11). Tragedy, we may say, celebrates a moral triumph in the same time as it laments a physical defeat. By «moral triumph» we do not mean the triumph of some moral end like Justice, but that manifestation of courage and steadfastness, of nobility and grandeur which we feel at the closing scenes of «Eumenides», «Oedipus at Colonus», «Othello» and other great tragedies. Man does not reveal the very depth of his heart until the moment when he is confronted with great misfortunes and calamities. Then his grandeur d'âme rises in proportion to his suffering, and he becomes infinitely greater than he has usually been. Imagine that Socrates and Jesus Christ died a different death, would they have the same power over man's mind? In Tragedy we are witnessing men and women of exceptional characters passing through their last moment of revelation. They rise with their suffering, and we rise with them. We feel great and noble ourselves in seeing them great and noble. That is why in Tragedy there is always a heroic note, and in our emotional response to it there is always an element of wonder and admiration. It is the admiration for the nobility and grandeur with which the hero faces his great calamities that Prof. A. C. Bradley describes as «the feeling of reconciliation» (see Chapter VII). The influence of great tragedies is thus unintentionally moral. «In the

drama of the highest order», writes Shelley in «The Defense of Poetry», «there is little food for censure and hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect». It does this because in the tragic hero we catch a glimpse of our own depth.

The sense of the tragic, as we have shown in Chapter V, is related to the sense of the sublime. In both cases we experience a rush of self-expansion after a momentary check. The tragic or the sublime object at first overwhelms us and makes us feel our littleness, we are somehow humiliated; but it soon inspires us and makes us share its greatness, we feel uplifted and ennobled.

In jenem sel'gem Augenblicke
Ich fühlte mich so klein, so gross,

as Goethe has expressed it in «Faust». Herein lies the paradox of tragic fatalism. On the one hand in the working of Fate we have a vivid impression of human insignificance and impotence. However good and properous a hero may be, he is driven willy-nilly to destruction by a force which he can neither understand nor resist. On the other hand in man's reaction against Fate, we experience also an intense feeling of vitality, a sense of human nobility and greatness. The contradiction is only apparent. «It is only amidst difficulties and struggles», as Schlegel has well observed, «that the moral part of man's nature avouches itself» (12). Tragedy cannot go without the idea of Fate, just as human greatness cannot fully reveal itself except in adversity; but mere fatalism does not give rise to Tragedy, tragic fatalism must not efface our sense of human dignity. Fate may crush great and noble heroes, but she cannot crush greatness and nobility. The same paradox holds good for pessimism and optimism in Tragedy. Every great tragedy must be to a certain extent pessimistic, as it shows evils in their most hideous aspects and as it does not always vindicate virtue and justice; but every great tragedy must be at bottom optimistic, as its essence is in its heroic grandeur and as it inspiries in us a feeling of vitality and a sense of strenuous effort. Tragedy is ever full of contradictions, and that makes it so elu-

sive when one tries to get hold of it. Theorists often content themselves with some one aspect of Tragedy and make generalizing remarks which they confidently hold to be true of Tragedy as a whole. Some see nothing but pessimism in Tragedy, others see nothing but optimism in it; some regard Fate as the very basis of Tragedy, others refuse to believe that Tragedy has anything to do with Fate at all. They are equally right and equally wrong — right in that they do each get hold of one side of the truth, wrong in that they ignore the other half of it. A sound theory of Tragedy must embrace all the contradictory facts — the sense of Fate and the sense of human dignity, pessimism and optimism, none of these should be left out of account.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEARTH AND DEATH OF TRAGEDY: TRAGEDY IN RELATION TO RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

I.

Nietzsche has given us a passionate and enchanting picture of the «Birth of Tragedy», which, he says, «sufficed for the best of its time». A book on the Dearth and Death of Tragedy is yet to be written. It is a less pleasant task but nevertheless worth attempting.

Tragedy, both the word and the thing, is Greek by origin. It is a genre of literature almost unknown to other great races of the world; neither the Chinese, nor the Hindus, nor the Hebrews possess a single specimen of tragedy in the strictest sense of the word. The same thing may be said of the Romans. It is highly questionable whether modern European Tragedy could ever come into being at all, had the Greek tragedies never been written, handed down and formed a venerable literary tradition.

If we examine the reasons why Tragedy flourished only in Greece and not in other parts of the world, we shall find some

further support for our view that the idea of Fate is essential both to the creation and to the appreciation of Tragedy. M. Camboulin in his «Essai sur la fatalité dans le théâtre grec» has vigorously attacked the generally accepted view that the feeling of fatality is prominent in Greek tragedies. According to him, it is not Fate, but Justice, that is the guiding principle of Aeschylus and his illustrious successors. He stigmatizes fatalism as something essentially oriental and refuses to believe that the brave Europeans have ever been inflected with it (1). Prof. Dixon also talks of «the tired races of the East» as «the Defeatists, whose infected airs improverish the vitality of the West» (2). The popular notion in Europe that the Orientals are especially fatalistic in their life-outlook seems to be rather strange, when one compares the general spirit which underlies the Homeric poems, the classical and the Romantic tragedies, the Mediaeval Romances and the Northern sagas, with that which underlies the Confucian Classics and the Buddhist Suttas. Such a mistaken notion would not be worth refuting, if it did not touch the central problem of Tragedy.

After all, what is fatalism? It is the belief in a super-human power which pre-ordains human affairs in a way which is at once beyond human control and beyond human intelligence. It is intimately connected with the sense of the tragic, and may be regarded as the primitive man's attempt at explaining the origin of Evil. The natural desire for happiness has led man to take it for granted that he is born to be happy. When unhappy things occur continually to baffle his natural desires and he fails to discern any principle of justice in the allotment of them, he feels utterly perplexed and asks himself why in a world where there is apparently a moral order, such unhappy things should come to pass at all. The obvious answer that occurs to the primitive mind is that things unintelligible to men are determined by Fate. This is what is generally understood by the word «fatalism». Taken in this general sense, fatalism is a belief common to all human races in their primitive stage. But owing to differences in climate, tem-

perament and culture, some races feel more strongly the force of Fate and think a good deal more about it than others, while some find the problem of Fate too troublesome or too remote from the life of this world, and leave it alone. Such a difference in the attitude towards Fate explains to a large extent the different forms and levels of cultural achievements such as religion, philosophy and art, attained by various races. It explains also the presence or absence of Tragedy in any particular nation.

«We are hardly in the neighbourhood of Tragedy», as Prof. Dixon has very justly remarked, «till we are forced to reflect and yet find our reflection fails us» (3). Tragedy, we may add, does not content itself with any result of reflection. Though it tries to solve the same ultimate problems of Good and Evil as religion and philosophy, its spirit is alien to both. When a people or an individual is satisfied with a religion or a philosophy, the need for Tragedy would disappear. Philosophy tries to explain away what is perplexing and so does religion to a certain extent. Both philosophy and religion find peace and repose in a dogma whether rationalistically demonstrable or emotionally satisfying. For both of them the problem of Evil is solved. Tragedy, on the other hand, fails to find a solution or satisfies with none. In the end, it, too, finds its peace and repose, not in a dogma, but in the brillant images of the sufferings and evils which have presented themselves to man as a problem. In other words, Tragedy suspends judgment and loses itself in aesthetic contemplation. As Nietzsche has well put it: «The sufferer feels the deepest longing for beauty; he begets it». We can now understand why moralistic interpretations of Tragedy are generally misleading, for they reduce Tragedy to a religious faith or a philosophical dogma.

A «fatalistic religion» is almost a self-conradictory term, for religion in whatever form is based on faith and hope, and an absolute fatalism would deprive man of the freedom to choose between Good and Evil, i.e. it would destroy faith and hope. Philosophy may sometimes involve the notion of Fate. But a fata-

listic philosophy, so far as it is a solution to the problem of Evil, and so far as it secures for its believer peace and repose, puts a full stop to any further dealing with Fate. A man may believe in the existence of Fate, and yet emotionally be indifferent to it. Tragedy differs from both religion and philosophy in this respect. On the one hand, it is not philosophy, as it does not formulate fatalism as a definite creed; on the other hand, unlike religion, it feels strongly that there is something in the universe which is neither intellectually explicable nor morally justifiable. The image of this «something» holds the tragic poets in awe and wonder; and it is this feeling of awe and wonder in presence of what is neither intellectually explicable nor emotionally justifiable, that we call «the sense of Fate» in Tragedy.

Let us illustrate these abstract remarks by some concrete examples.

The venerable Bede has told us a vivid story about the conversion of Northumbria to Christianity. Paulinus, one of Augustine's followers, urged Eadwine, the Northumbrian king, to adopt the new faith. The king called a council and asked the opinion of his wisemen. One of them burst forth:

«So seems the life of man, O King, as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in wintertide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other, vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it». His council was adopted (4).

Now the comparison between man's life with a sparrow's flight in a winter night is a tragic vision. The darkness of the past and the future oppresses the mind of the aged Ealdorman and he is anxious to find some means of escaping it. Christianity

comes in opportunely to save him from pessimism and fatalism. In general, we may say, religion is born of the sense of the tragic. Dissatisfaction with the present breeds ardent hope for the future. The most religious people are those who have suffered most. But when one has found peace and repose in a religion, one's sense of the tragic diminishes or disappears altogether; for from the religious point of view, the evils and sufferings of this transitory world are insignificant compared with the bliss and beatitude of the future Kingdom. So the road to religion takes one away from Tragedy, as the conversion of Eadwine well exemplifies it.

Another road which takes one away from Tragedy is moral philosophy or a definite practical outlook of life. There is perhaps no better example of this than the «Candide» of Voltaire. Candide has experienced all the imaginable tragic events of life, — forced separation from his beloved; narrow escapes from death in war, tempest, ship-wreck, earth-quake, Spanish Inquisition, and other embarrassing circumstances; the crime of killing the brother of his beloved; loss of an immense fortune; imposture of sharpers, doctors and prostitutes. But all these calamities and misfortunes do not constitute for Candide a tragedy. Leaving all his unhappy memories behind, he finally settles himself down at Constantinople and devotes himself during the rest of his life to the cultivation of a small farm. Though he does not share the stark optimism of Dr. Pangloss, he is by no means a pessimist. The concluding passage of the famous story is particularly interesting:

«Pangloss disait quelquefois à Candide: 'Tous les évènements sont enchaînés dans le meilleur des mondes possibles: car enfin, si vous n'aviez pas été chassé d'un beau château à grand coups de pied dans le derrière pour l'amour de Melle Cunégonde, si vous n'aviez pas été mis à l'Inquisition, si vous n'aviez pas couru l'Amérique à pied, si vous n'aviez pas donné un bon coup d'épée au baron, si vous n'aviez pas perdu tous vos moutons

du bon pays d'Eldorado, vous ne mangeriez pas ici des cédrats confits et des pistaches.' — 'Cela est bien dit', répondit Candide, 'mais il faut cultiver notre jardin'» (5).

«Il faut cultiver notre jardin», that is to say, do our work and leave the problem of sufferings and evils to take care of itself. That is a definite practical outlook of life, a moral philosophy, if you like. It saves Candide from the lot of a tragic hero, and it prevents also the story named after him from being a tragedy. «Candide», as we all know, is Voltaire's retort to the doctrine of Leibnitz and Wolf that our world is the best of all possible worlds. Its hero represents more or less Voltaire himself. Voltaire, with all his knowledge of the tragic side of human life, did not happen to have any profound sense of the tragic. He was a philosopher, that is the reason why he was not a great tragic poet.

The difference among religion, philosophy and Tragedy applies to nations as well as to individuals. The Hebrews and the Hindus, like the Northumbrian wiseman above mentioned, take the road of religion; the Chinese and, to a less extent, the Romans, like the Candide of Voltaire, content themselves with a practical moral philosophy. This explains the Dearth of Tragedy among these nations. But let us examine them in more details.

II.

Like the Romans, the Chinese as a race are the most practical and secularistic among all nations. They are little given to abstract metaphysical thinking and refuse to grapple with any ultimate problems the solutions of which do not seem to them to have any obvious direct bearing on practical life. Philosophy means to them moral philosophy and nothing else. In spite of the cult of ancestor-worship (which is really not a religion but only a way of keeping up the memory of departed parents), they

have but a faint feeling for religion. Their indifference explains their tolerance in religious matters. Nearly all the great religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohamedanism, besides the indigene cult of Confucianism and Taoism, have their worshippers in China. But such a concurrence of rival religious sects, has never led to a religious war as in Europe and India. A Confucian scholar does not hesitate to profess the faith of Buddhism or Christianity at the same time. One can well imagine that they are neither intellectually inquisitive nor emotionally disturbed when they are confronted with the problem of human destiny. It is true that in their hours of unhappiness they also attribute their sufferings to the work of Fate. But with them fatalism gives rise to optimism rather than to pessimim. When a man consoles his friend who has lost a child by saying «it is Fate», he means really: «Be more cheerful, do not worry so much about it». Trace anything back to Fate, and there is an end of the matter and no occasion for further anxiety. The Chinese really do not trouble themselves much about Fate, nor do they find anything in it that is unnatural or questionable. The misery of the virtuous and the prosperity of the wicked do not give them much alarm; they accept it as Fate has ordained. There is a marked Voltairian trait in the Chinese character. With Voltaire they say: «Il faut cultiver notre jardin» and leave Fate alone.

This attitude is well exemplified by their national teacher, Confucius. It is recorded by his disciples in the «Analects»: «There were four things of which the Master seldom spoke: extraordinary things, feats of strength, rebellious disorders and spiritual beings». When some one asked him what constituted wisdom, he replied, «To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, — that may be called wisdom». Another time one of his disciples, Tsu-Lu, asked him how to serve spirits. «When you cannot serve men», replied he, «how can you serve spirits?» Tsu-Lu pressed him further, «What do you think about death?»

He answered in the same stern strains, «while you do not know life, what can you know about death?» These are his typical utterances and they have influenced the Chinese mind much more strongly than the Ten Commandments and the Four Gospels on the Christian mind .As a result of his secularistic teaching, the Chinese have riveted their glance exclusively on earthly affairs. The usual motto for a happy and good life is: «Rejoice in nature and be content with Fate». This amounts to saying: «Satisfy yourselves with whatever is alloted to you, do not call on Fate to account for her doings, and you will be happy». Call it «fatalism» if you like, but it is none-the-less optimistic.

With the Chinese a strong moral sense takes the place of a fanatic religious fervour. They think that man's salvation lies in man himself rather than in any divine force. What they call «Min» («what is pre-ordained») is more like the Christian Providence than the Greek Moirae; it is more an impartial judge than a capricious goddess. They strongly believe that virtue will always be rewarded and vice punished, if not in this world, then in the next. A virtuous man who suffers from misfortune is always thought to have done something wrong in a previous state of existence. The blame is always laid on the victim himself and not on Fate.

With such ethical convictions, the Chinese naturally do not feel very deeply about the tragic side of life. They regard it a wisdom to accept what is given with contentment. Stoic heroism is but ill-favoured with the tragic muse. Tragedy cannot exist without some sense of injustice about human destiny, and the Chinese refuse to recognize any injustice in sufferings and miseries at all. Moreover their literature is shackled by their moral sense. Art with them is always a serious matter and it has generally a moral purpose. Books written merely for amusement are regarded with disdain. This fact explains the poverty of purely imaginative and fictitious literature, it explains also the belated development of drama. Drama in China has never enjoyed the re-

spect that is paid to it in Europe. The actors and play-wrights are put in the same category as buffoons and jugglers. Great writers seldom condescend to exercise their pen in writing a play. Though the origin of Chinese drama may be traced back to The Emperor Tang Hsuan-Tsen (About 7th Century A. D.), it did not flourish till the Yuan Dynasty, (1283-1368 A. D.) when China was under foreign rulers. The traditional form of Chinese literature did not please the Mongolean Emperors, and literary men found the formerly despised drama a fresh channel to vent their energy and a new stepping-stone to high office. It was a time when the national spirit sank to its lowest ebb and when the flourishing period of Chinese literature was already far gone (about twelve centuries after Confucius edited the Classics and four centuries after the Tang Dynasty, the Augustan period of Chinese lyrical poetry). Imagine that Greek drama did not rise at the age of Pericles but at the time of Roman domination, you will have a just idea of what such a belated growth meant to the Chinese drama, and you will probably also see one of the reasons why Chinese literature, rich in other respects, makes but a poor show in the form of Tragedy.

As a matter of fact, drama in China is almost a synonym for comedy. The Chinese play-wrights always insist on a happy ending in which the virtuous is rewarded and the wicked punished. They would never endure such painful scenes as the death of Iphigenia, Hippolytus or Cordelia. Nor do they touch upon any subject which seems to them profane and indecent .A Chinese audience would be shocked by such scenes as Oedipus becoming the husband of his own mother, Phœdra cherishing an illicit passion for her step-son, or Admetus blaming his old parents for not willing to die instead of himself. The passions which are the most exploited by Chinese dramatists are fame and love. Perhaps the Freudian doctrine of art as wish-fulfillment is nowhere so well exemplified as in the Chinese drama, though here «wish» seldom undergoes the elaborate process of repression and sublima-

tion. The hero is in nine cases out of ten a poor scholar travelling to the imperial palace to pass an examination. He comes out first in the list of successful candidates, becomes a high official, returns home in all pomp, and marries the lady whom he has loved for a long time. Or, he is a victim of injustice, ill-treated by some powerful but vicious man, suffering from all sorts of miseries, but finally he is revenged either through the impartiality of some high magistrate or through his own ascendancy to power. The situation is of course often complicated by unhappy incidents, but the ending is always happy. Interest in Chinese drama generally lies in what Aristotle calls «Peripetia», but seldom in the final catastrophe. Open any unknown play at random, no matter what a painful situation in which the principal personages find themselves, you may be sure that they will be all right in the end; what you want to know is how they manage to come to the happy ending. The total impression of a piece is seldom gloomy. More than five hundred plays were written in the Yuan Dynasty alone (i.e. in a period of less than a century), but not a single one of them can be properly called a tragedy.

Very often a tragic theme is turned into a comedy. For example let us take the piece called «The Orphan of The Chao Family», best known to European readers as it has inspired Voltaire to write his «Orphelin de la Chine» (6). It is not the best specimen of the Chinese drama; it is introduced to Europe mainly because, we think, in it the lyrical element is reduced to its minimum and consequently it offers less difficulties to translators than most Chinese plays of greater merit. But as it is known to European readers, it is convenient for illustration. The source of the play is drawn from authentic history. In the kingdom of Cheng, there were two rival ministers, Tou Ngan-Kou and Chao Tung. Tou was a wicked man and by a series of intrigues and crimes, exterminated the whole family of Chao, except a child who was secretly hidden away by Chin Yin, a loyal friend of the Chao family. Like Herod, Tou proclaimed that all infants of the country

should be massacred, if the orphan was not delivered, and that those who would shelter him were liable of capital punishment. Alarmed by this threat ,Chin Yin went to consult with Kung-Sen Shu-Ju, another friend of the Chao family. Here is the substance of the dialogue carried on between them:

> Chin Yin: — I have saved the orphan and brought him here to you. His father treated me well and I will take this opporunity to show my gratitude. Besides, the lives of the innocent children of the country are in imminent danger, they must be saved at all cost. I have a child of the same age as the orphan. Go and deliver me up to the villain. I will perish with my own child as the disguised orphan. Then it is your duty to raise up the orphan. Once grown up, he will be able to revenge his family.
>
> Kung-Sen: But it takes at least twenty years to raise up the child to a grown-up man. Since I have counted up seventy years now, I shall be surely in the grave after another twenty years. Who could reveral the whole truth to the orphan at that time? Since you are twenty years my junior, it would be better that I perish with your child and you live to take care of the orphan and of the revenge.

The plan was agreed to and successfully carried out. Twenty years were gone by. The orphan cried for justice at the royal court and obtained it.

As it may be gathered from the plot, the play reminds one of both «Athalie» and «Hamlet». Like Joas, the orphan was saved and raised up through the courage and sagacity of a loyal friend. In his heroic self-sacrifice, Chin Yin surpassed Joad, the great Jewish priest. Like Hamlet, the orphan was to take vengeance on an enemy who had murdered his father and usurped the honours due to himself. Judging from the title, — for the full title of the play is «The great Revenge of The Orphan Chao» — one might expect that it is something of sanginary nature like «Hamlet», filling the stage with corpses in the fifth act. But it is noth-

ing of the kind. The revenge is only promised by a royal decree and not represented on the stage. The final stroke comes to the satisfaction of every-body, even the villain himself acknowledges its justice. The author has a moral lesson to teach, — the ultimate triumph of loyality and justice, and that triumph coincides with the dénoument.

The moral purpose of the play has led the author to emphasize the escape rather than the revenge of the Orphan. The real hero is Chin Yin rather than the orphan himself. This makes the play resemble «Athalie» more than «Hamlet». Racine's closing lines:

.... les rois dans le ciel ont un juge sévère,
L'innocence un vengeur, et l'orphelin un père,

may be regarded as a fitting motto of the Chinese play. Both pieces express a kind of moral satisfaction, the only difference lies in that in the Chinese play the religious colour of «Athalie» is entirely absent. Racine wrote «Athalie» as well as «Esther», we remember, to meet the demand of Madame de Maintenon, «faire sur quelque sujet de piété, de morale, une espèce de poème où le chant fût mêlé avec le récit, le tout lié par une action qui rendit la chose plus vive et moins capable d'ennuyer» (7). No words would describe the Chinese drama as a whole more befittingly than these. The Chinese drama is generally a poem or a song, it is more lyrical than dramatic. If we regard «Esther» and «Athalie» as tragedies, then we may say that the Chinese possess some specimens which come very near to these later works of Racine. But it is purely conventional to classify «Esther» and «Athalie» in the same category as «Andromaque» and «Phèdre». There is a gap between these two classes of plays in spirit as well as in chronological order. In the two biblical plays, Racine is more a Hebrew than a Greek. The Hebrew spirit, as we shall see presently, is antagonistic to the spirit of Tragedy. The Chinese and the Hebrews, though as widely separated as the two poles with regard to religious fervour, are yet similar in one re-

spect: their strong moral sense inclines them to feel reluctant to acknowledge the tragic side of life. The suffering of the virtuous is in the eye of morality an injustice, and in the eye of religion a blasphemy. The Chinese and the Hebrews prefer to explain it away or to ignore it altogether. It is no wonder that in their temples there is no altar for the tragic muse.

III.

The legacy of India forms a prominent part in the Chinese culture. The rise of Chinese drama took place long after the Buddhist influence had spread over the whole country, we may naturally suspect that in India too, Tragedy did not find a natural home, for otherwise it should have left its imprint on the Chinese stage. The examination of the Hindu drama is all the more important, as Schopenhauer has familiarized the Western world with the idea that Tragedy, like Buddhism, teaches the worthlessnes of life and the abandonment of the Will-to-live. The simple fact is that the Buddhist religion did not happen to give rise to a tragedy, as Schopenhauer's theory would have led us to believe.

The Hindu religion passed through many stages of development. The early Brahmanism, like most other great religions, taught people to believe in Providence rather than in Fate. The spirits of the dead pass through a term of enjoyment in a happy region midway between the earth and the heaven, or undergo their measure of punishment in the nether world, according as they have been virtuous or wicked during their life in this world. Buddhism hardly acknowledges the existence of God, and still less does it recognize the operation of Fate in human affairs. The Dhammacakkepavatta Suta, which embodies the essential Buddhist teaching, enumerates four Truths conducive to Enlightenment and Nirvana, says nothing about either divine Pro-

vidence or blind Fate. For an orthodox Buddhist the origin of Evil lies in man himself and there is no royal road to salvation except through individual effort. Buddhism, with its founder at least, is a religion not for defeatists but for brave spirits who accept the responsibility for their words and deeds, for their happiness and suffering.

Such a self-relying religion, lofty as it is, tells but unfavourably on the growth of Tragedy. It is not that the Hindus have no sense of the tragic. Buddhism itself was born of a tragic vision of life, for Gautama Buddha renounced the world after having seen in the course of one day an old man, a sick man and a corpse. But the tragic side of life teaches the Buddhist the illusory nature of worldly happiness, awakens his moral sympathy for the suffering humanity and incites him to think of salvation. To amuse oneself at the sight of tragic events, however imaginary and fictitious they are, would be to a Buddhist not only a «Craving» which is the cause of pain, but also a sign of cruelty. Hence India, though once a soil trodden by Alexander and his Greek tragedians, has not developed a tragedy.

The Nâtya-Veda of Bharata, a code of dramatic art which is reputed to be of divine origin and which has exercised on the development of the Indian drama an influence greater even than the «Poetics» of Aristotle in Europe, mentions several forms of drama, among which Tragedy is conspicuous by its absence. The Nâtaka, the highest form of drama, is a heroic comedy with high personages, heroic actions and a dignified language. It comes nearest to tragedy, but it never ends in a great calamity. The Nâtya-Veda actually lays down a definite rule against unhappy endings. The action in every piece is to pass through five stages, the final one is always «Phalayoga» or success (8). Prof. H. H. Wilson, a great authority on Indian literature, summarizes the nature of Indian drama in the following words:

«The Hindu plays confine themselves neither to the 'crimes nor to the absurdities of mankind', neither to 'momentous chan-

ges, nor lighter vicissitudes of life'; neither to the terrors of distress nor the gaieties of prosperity'. ....They are invariably of a mingled web, and blend 'seriousness and sorrow with levity cite all the emotions of the human breast, terror and pity inclusion, which, as Johnson remarks, was enough to constitute a tragedy in Shakespeare's days; and although they propose to excite all the emotions of the human breast, terror and pity included, they never effect this object by leaving a painful impression upon the mind of the spectator. The Hindus, in fact, have no tragedy» (9).

In this respect the Indian drama resembles the Chinese. To illustrate the abhorrence of the Hindus for tragic endings, let us take the «Sakuntala» of Kadidasa, the crowning achievement of the Hindu drama. The play derives its source from the popular Hindu mythology as embodied in the Epic poem «Mahâ-Bhârata», and has for its hero a semi-divine king, who often has commerce with the deities themselves. Its formal resemblance to Greek tragedies is obvious, but in its spirit, it is more congenial to the Eastern soil than to its Aryan parentage. The King Dushmanta was hunting in a remote forest inhabited only by pious hermits. There he met and fell in love with a damsel of divine origin and of surpassing beauty, Sakuntala. They were married. Before his return to the royal palace, he promised to send soon for the young bride and gave her a ring for a token of remembrance. Sakuntala became so absorbed in thinking of her absent lard that she did not hear a wandering Brahman entreating for hospitality, — a sacriligious negligence for the Hindus. The enraged Brahman uttered a curse to the effect that she would be forgotten by her lord and that the curse could only be removed by showing him the ring that he had given her. Meanwhile, Dushmanta did not fulfill his promise and Sakuntala became pregnant. On the advice of her foster-father, she set out to the royal palace to claim her title as queen. But the curse of the Brahman had produced its effect, and Dushmanta, whose memory failed through delirium, utterly

forgot his past amourous adventure and could not even recognize his young bride. Though he greatly admired her beauty, Sakuntala was rejected. She could produce no evidence, for she had lost her fatal ring in a bath. But the ring was soon found by a fisherman, and at the sight of it, the king recovered his memory and recollected his relation with Sakuntala. He realized the injustice he had done her, and was smitten with repentance. She had been carried away by the Gods to live in a happy region. But in the end his wish to see her again was fulfilled through divine intervention (10).

The play is thus a curious blending of the idyllic love of Theocrytus and the wild fantasy of the «Arabian Nights». It is true that Fate does play a part in it — as a matter of fact, the sub-title is «The fatal ring». But compared with the fate in Greek tragedies, the fate in «Sakuntala» is not nearly half so oppressive, so mischievous and so irresistible. It is almost like an insect entangled in the eye, irritating but producing no lasting harm. The most pathetic part of the play is certainly the scene in which Dushmanta refused to recognize Sakuntala as his wife. It is treated, however, with a restraint and serenity that surpass even the Greeks. The strong moral feeling in the bosom of each character prevents the scene from being really tragic. Dushmanta, in a state of delirium, believed that Sakuntala was the wife of another man, and therefore he was acting in the right in refusing to take her. Moreover it must be borne in mind that this scene is only a peripetia which exchances the effect of the happy ending. The «fatal ring» in the play bears a greater resemblance to the ring that Portia gives to Bassanio than the handkerchief that Othello gives to Desdemona.

The closing speech of Dushmanta has been perplexing to many European readers. When he found out Sakuntala and had all that he wished for, a deity asked him if he desired other favours from the Gods, what do you think how he should answer?

«Let every king apply himself», he says, «to the attainment

of happiness of his people; let Saraswati, the Goddess of liberal arts, be adored by all readers of the Veda; and may Shiva, with an azure neck and red locks, eternally potent and self-existing, avert from me the pain of another birth in this perishable world, the seat of crimes and punishments».

And so ends the play. The last wish of Dushmanta comes as a surprise, and almost a contradiction. It is a dark cloud coming suddenly to cover an illuminous sky. It sounds like a tragic note and one might cite it to support the theory of Schopenhauer. But to those who are familiar with Indian thought and religion, there is really nothing pessimistic or tragic in it; it is a sudden disillusionment, it is also a sudden enlightenment. The transitory nature of worldly happiness leads the Hindus to long for what they believe to be an eternal blessing, the state of pure soul. Such a life out-look would be pessimistic, if the word «pessimistic» could be applied to the philosophy of Plato; and the closing lines of «Sakuntala» would be tragic; if the word «tragic» could be applied to Plato's parable of the chained man in the cave.

IV.

The case of India shows very well that the mere possession of a religion and a mythology does not carry with it the birth of Tragedy as a necessary consequence. This truth reveals itself even more clearely in the case of the Hebrews. Not only the Chosen Children of God have produced no tragedy, but with them drama of any form is totally absent. We should have left them alone in our present discussion, if their case did not bring home to us more vividly the antagonism between a settled religion and the spirit of Tragedy, and if Christianity had not exercised a tremendous influence on the development of modern European drama.

The absence of Tragedy in Hebrew literature is all the more striking when we remember the fact that no other human race has seen more of the tragic side of life than the Israelites. The name itself — the Hebrew word «Yisrael» means «striver with God», — bears the emblem of bitter expeniences. Born to an unproductive soil, driven by famine to wander among hostile neighbours, exposed to perpetual contempt and persecutions, they have led but a precarious life throughout all the ages. Nor have all these misfortunes fallen on a people without cultural tradition and literary taste. Their literary achievements are second to none. Coleridge even went so far as to say that the sense of the sublime is Hebrew by origin. Richness in poetical images, sincerity in sentiment, familarity with sufferings and calamities — all these would have enabled the Hebrews to create a great tragedy. Nor did the Hebrews lack dramatic imagination, for there are passages in the Old Testament which are highly dramatic.

The reason for the dearth of Tragedy among the Hebrews is to be sought elsewhere. Drama is born of the play-impulse. The Hebrews are perhaps the most serious and earnest of all races; they have mightier cares than to amuse themselves with the trickeries of comedians and buffoons. Their deep moral sense and strong regious fervour also prevent them from feeling misfortunes and calamities as tragic. Faith saves them from falling in what might be called «the tragic mood». Of all peoples perhaps the least favoured by God, they yet believe themselves to be this Chosen Children. Evils are for them the result of the original sin; vice and wickedness shall receive their due on the day of Last Judgment; the misfortunes and calamities that fall on the virtuous men are only a test of their faith; even Death shall disappear at the coming of Messiah. Such great calamities as the Flood, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorah, the earthquake that swallowed up Korah and his people, and the destruction of Egypt, are all represented in the Bible as Divine Judgments. So with the Hebrews the world is entirely ordered according to the principle of

justice. God cannot be wrong and such is his work; he is omnipotent, so things are all pre-ordained by Providence and not by Fate. When everything is so satisfactorily explained, how could there be any tragedy? «Diminish Evil», says Nietzsche, «and it will go hard with the tragic poets».

There is perhaps no greater production of the Hebrew genius than «The Book of Job». But with all its sublime conception and imaginative splendour, with all its pity and fear, the Book of Job is in no sense tragic. In the Hebrew poetry, the tragic always sinks in the sublime, and pity and fear in the strong conviction of Divine Justice; the Book of Job is one of the most typical instances. Job was a pious and upright man possessing great riches and numerous children. At the suggestion of Satan, Job was put to a great trial. His cattles were stolen from him and his children were killed as a result of the collapse of their house. Job declared God's act to be just. «Naked came I out of my mother's womb», he said, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of God». But his piety did not prevent for him further calamities. He was smitten with a most painful disease. Still he did not complain. When his wife advised him to curse God and die, he replied: «What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?» It was only when three of his friends came to argue with him about the justice of the divine government that his patience began to give way. He complains of his sufferings and reproaches God for taking delight in torturing him. He describes the perverseness of the wicked and wonders why God, who sees everything, does not punish them. He addresses a series of questions to God Himself; but instead of receiving a satisfactory answer, he is asked by God a series of other unanswerable questions. So far the book may be described as tragic, and we may say that those questions which puzzled Job were precisely those which had puzzled Aeschylus and Sophocles. But while the great tragic poets stopped before their tragic vision, Job evaded his by taking the road of religious faith.

The mystery of the universe which had held Aeschylus and Sophocles in awe and wonder, held Job in pious devotion. In the end, Job repents in dust and ashes, and humbly submits himself to God. Lo, the wonders wrought by the Hebrew sense of justice! God restored Job to his former state, giving him twice as much as he had before, even fourteen sons! To represent Job as Aeschylus has represented Prometheus or as Sophocles has represented Oedipus would be the last thing in the world that the Hebrews could have done or endured.

V.

The thesis we have developed in the present chapter — that religion is antagonistic to Tragedy — goes against the prevailing notion that Greek tragedy had its origin in Greek religion. As a matter of fact, the Greeks had no religion in the strictest sense of the word, i.e. in the sense in which Buddhism, Christianity or Mohamedanism is a religion. Myths, superstitions, sacrificial rites — these things the Greeks had, as the Chinese have them. But they had no more settled faith and consistent theology than the Chinese.

Of all human races the Hebrews are religious par excellence, and there is perhaps no other race which is more different in spirit from the Hebrews than the Greeks. The Hebrews with their piety would look upon the Greeks as a profane race, and the Greeks, on the other hand, with their all-round interests and their moderation, would look upon the Hebrews as fanatics and «Philistines». Let us illustrate their difference with a concrete example.

In the «Book of Judges» there is a legend about the daugther of Jephtha. Before going to war with the people of Ammon, Jephtha made a vow to sacrifice to Yhwh whatsoever came out first of his house to meet him if he should return victorious. Victorious he did return, and the person who came out first the greet nim

was no other than his only daugther, dancing to the sound of timbrels. Both father and child were smitten wih sorrow and grief; but both father and child were firm in obeying the Will of God. So she was sacrified after a respite of two months during which she bewailed her virginity with her maids in the mountains. Now this is almost an exact parallel legend of Iphigenia. Compared with the heroine of Euripides, the Hebrew maid may be said to be an even more tragical figure; for in the first place, Agamemnon had Orestes and Electra besides Iphigenia, whereas Jephtha had no other child; and secondly, Iphigenia, at least in the tragedy of Euripides, was saved by Artemis, whereas the daughter of Jephtha actually met her death. But in point of fact, the Jephtha legend in the Bible is more a moral lesson than a tragedy, as there is no conflict of passion and duty, the innocent heroine is above our pity, she is an object to be admired and revered. Compare the different attitudes of both father and daughter in the two legends, the difference between the Greek and the Hebrew spirit will be seen at once. Jephtha, though his child was very dear to him, accepted his calamity as Providence ordained. «I have opened my mouth unto the Lord», he said, «and I cannot go back». Agamemnon, on the other hand, tried to save his daughter and he gave way only at the last moment under the pressure of Menelaus. The difference between the two heroines is even more striking. The daughter of Jephtha, though she regretted that she was to die unwedded in the prime of her life, did not hesitate to do what she regarded as a sacred duty. «My father», she said, «if thou hath opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; for inasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies». The Iphigenia as painted by Euripides is perhaps more true to nature but much less consistent in her faith and in her sentiment. At first she asked grace for her life which she was by no means willing to renounce. Then she accepted the inevitable and gave it out to be understood that she died for Greece and for her own glory. But at the bottom

of her heart she hated bitterly the Greeks who had caused her death. She brooded over her wrongs even when she became priestess to the Altar of Artemis. She hoped that some day she might slaughter Greeks at her Altar as mercilessly as they had slaughtered her at Aulis. A strong religious faith, such as Jephtha's daughter had, would have saved her from so much mental convulsion. But as she had no such faith, she felt very strongly the tragedy of her fate (11).

Is Iphigenia or Euripides to blame for such contradictions or inconsistencies? It does not matter which, all that is important for us to notice here is that the Greeks, unlike the Hebrews. had no consistent religious convictions. Aeschlus, Sophocles, and to a less extent Euripides, are always puzzling those who insist on extracting moral and religious views from their works. Writers on Greek tragedy generally accept the traditional view originated by Aristophanes that the first Greek tragic poets looked on themselves as theologians and preachers, they forget or ignore Plato's view to the contrary. What did the Greek tragic poets preach? Divine Justice or blind Fate? Determinism or free will? Sometimes the one, sometimes the other. They never formulated the problems in a clear-cut fashion, so they never gave any consistent answers. Is not Aeschylus generally described as «beyond all other dramatists a theologian?». But from the theological or ethical point of view, there can be nothing more inconsistent than the Orestian Trilogy. Orestes was commanded by the Oracle of Apollo to revenge his father. Was he to blame for the murder of his mother? If he was, then it was Apollo who had incited him to the crime; if he was not, there is no reason why he should be haunted by the Furies. The notion of the retribution of ancestral crimes seems to imply the recognition of Providence; but if parricide, infanticide and incest are crimes — and undoubtedly they are — it is rather impious to think that they should be perpetuated by the Will of Gods.

In fact the Greek notion of Gods would have shocked any

thorough-bred Hebrew. The Greek Gods were just and yet they were also jealous and malignant; they were divine beings, and yet they were subject to human passions and even to mortal wounds; they were omnipotent and yet they had sometimes to bow themselves before Fate. Zeus, Moirae and Fortune all held their sway over the Greek mind and nobody knew exactly which of them was the real ruler. The Cosmos as the Greeks conceived it was an extremely chaotic one. Lucian in a dialogue entitled «Zeus cross-examined» shows very well the chaotic state of Greek Cosmology. Cyniscus asks Zeus: «Is all this about Destiny and the Fates told us by the poets to be trusted?». «Certainly», says Zeus. Then Cyniscus presses Zeus with a series of impertinent questions. Besides Destiny is there not Fortune? People are always talking about their invincible power, how exactly is this power distributed? Do the Fates control the Gods? If they do, are the Gods not as much their slaves as the mortals are? What is the use of offering sacrifice to Zeus? Further, what about Providence? Is Providence a Fate or something greater? Who is to be responsible for the misfortune of the virtuous and the prosperity of the wicked, Gods, or Destiny, or Providence? Again, if Fate brings about everything, when a man commits murder, is Fate the murderess? If so, should Minos not punish her instead of the poor man, who, willy-nilly, obeys her irresistible command? Zeus is rather hard put to it by these questions. He blames Cyniscus for having been with the Sophists and refuses to talk with him (12).

Writing in the second century after Jesus Christ, Lucian naturally did not see these problems as the Greek tragedians had seen them. They had not been with the Sophists, «that accursed race». None-the-less they did try to grasp the meaning of these questions, however vaguely they understood them. Like Lucian, they were more or less sceptic; but unlike him, they were emotionally disturbed both by Cosmic grandeur and by Cosmic abnormalities. Mere scepticism is no less antagonistic to the spirit of

Tragedy than a definite faith, as the case of Voltaire bears witness. In Tragedy scepticism never goes so far as to smother what are generally called «Cosmic emotions». In Aeschylus and Sophocles we can always discern a happy blending of intellectual vigilance and emotional profundity. Pious souls they were, they would not openly lay evils at the door of the Gods; but they never-the-less wondered why unhappy things should occur as they did, if the Gods were always just. They had no consistent religion or ethical code. If they had, they would do what the Hebrews and the Chinese have done, they would either find peace and repose in a religious faith or leave alone the ultimate problem of existence. Tragic events in life would not have troubled them so much, and they would not have produced any tragedy. In saying this, we are by no means depreciating the Greeks, «of whom to learn at all is», says Nietzsche, «in itself a high honour and a rare distinction». Tragedy is the expression of an active and exuberant spirit in the state of wonder and perplexity. The possession of Tragedy is a sign of high vitality of a nation, as it takes the road of greatest resistance. One has to be profound and strong enough to see and to endure the tragic side of life. For the weaker mind it is far easier to take refuge in a religious faith or a philosophical dogma. The Greeks were not to be easily satisfied with a religion or a philosophy, theirs was an active and versatile mind. Confronted with the riddle of the universe, they experienced an intense inner conflict, the conflict between idea and reality. It was this inner conflict that gave birth to Greek tragedy.

VI.

Modern European civilization is a strange hybrid of Greek paganism and Hebrew piety. Its originality lies in its organic whole rather than in its constituting parts. Whether these diverse ingredients are always happily blended together is yet a question for

future historians to settle. Here we shall confine ourselves to a brief examination of the influence of such a heterogeneous culture on the development of modern tragedy.

The venerable position of Tragedy, secured through the Greek genius, has not been shaken in modern Europe. But a just estimate of modern tragedy is still wanting in spite of the famous quarrel of the ancients and the moderns. The proper perspective in which we ought to adjust our searching glance is doubly obscured by the traditional esteem accorded to Tragedy as a «genre», and by a narrow patriotism which leads enthusiastic critics to praise the tragedy of their own particular country or school beyond its real merit. We are now perhaps in a better position than the Romans to see tragedies of Seneca in their true light. Let another two or three thousand years pass by, how much of Shakespeare and Goethe shall remain on the same level as Aechylus and Sophocles? How much of Corneille, Racine and Alfieri shall stand the test of time better than Seneca? How much have the moderns contributed towards the perfection of Tragedy? or Do they have a tragedy at all? These seem to be impertinent questions, but they will be put by posterity .

Tragedy, as the Greeks created it, is the expression of a pagan spirit which is perplexed on the one hand by the longing for human liberty and divine justice and on the other, by the visualization of the misery of man, the blindness of Fate and the jealousy and malignity of Gods. An ill-defined dogmatism struggles with a profound scepticism; a superstitious dread of the supernatural force with a deep-rooted consciousness of human worth; a slight sophistic disposition with a deep poetic temperament, — these manifold conflicts constitute the essence of Greek tragedy. The clear blue Hellenic sky, the positive philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and the reputation which the Greeks enjoy for their God-like serenity are all obstacles which we have to overcome in order to get a glimpse of the much more sombre world underlying

tfe works of Aeschylus and his successors. Greek tragedy is the offspring of a special cultural background and a special racial temperament; it is not luxury but a necessity.

What sort of cultural background and what sort of racial temperament can the moderns offer to be compared with those of the Greeks? The tempest has passed; the sky has cleared up; mythology has faded, the Gods no longer mingle themselves with the mortals, and men have become more and more self-centred and self-relying. Is Tragedy a natural growth of modern culture and not a luxury? Had the Greek Tragedy never existed, could the moderns create a tragedy out of their own initiative? Modern tragedy, as a faint reminiscence of its classical prototype, is at its best only a transplanted growth on an uncongenial soil.

Modern European civilization has Christianity as one of its principal ingredients. With its emphasis on the moral order of the world, on Original Sin and Last Judgment, on submission and humility, Christianity is in every sense antagonistic to the spirit of Tragedy. Tragedy, as it represents the struggle of man with Fate, and as it often exposes vividly to our eyes inexplicable evils and undeserved sufferings, has always something profane and blasphemous in it. The discrepency between the Greek notion of tragic fatality and the Christian idea of Province was long ago pointed out by Schlegel:

«La fatalité est directement opposée à notre croyance religieuse; le christianisme lui a substitué l'idée de la providence. Il pourrait donc être mis en doute si un poëte chrétien, en voulant faire passer dans ses ouvrages la manière de voir qui est en rapport avec sa religion, ne se trouverait pas dans l'impossibilité de composer une véritable tragedie, et si la poesie tragique, création de l'homme abandonné à ses propres forces, ne disparaît pas, comme les autres fantômes nocturnes d'une imagination superstitieuse, devant l'aurore de la révélation» (13).

Schlegel did not commit himself to a definite answer to the questions he had thus formulated. In our view, the answer could

de Racine» (14). The crude representations of the Mediaeval English Puritans were very hostile to the secular drama, including tragedy. Historians of literature are usually fond of tracing the origin of modern drama to Mediaeval «miracles», «mysteries» and «moralities» performed at Christian service; how far this is true of comedy does not interest us here, but it is certainly not true of Tragedy. As Brunetière has remarked very well, «Les auteurs de nos mystères n'ont rien hérité des latins et des grecs, ...ils n'ont préparé ni le drame de Shakespeare ni la tragédie de Racine» (14). The crude representations of the Mediaeval Church festivals were nothing but dramatized biblical and religious legends. They have a definite purpose in religious edification and there is nothing tragic in them.

The rôle of Christian spirit in modern European literature is rather difficult to determine. When the Romantics, Chateaubriand for exampe, proposed to draw fresh inspiration from the Christian religion, they really had in mind the mediaeval pagan spirit that was superficially associated with it; for Christian faith has nothing in common with Romantic Melancholy. To confine ourselves to modern Tragedy, we may say that when it achieves anything that is genuine and original, it shows the triumph of paganism over Christianity.

This is especially true of Shakespeare. In tragedy at least, Shakespeare moves almost entirely in a pagan world. The form of Tragedy he inherits indirectly from the Greeks through Seneca and his English predecessors; the tragic spirit he inherits from his Teutonic ancestors who lived in the dark region of the North, struggling with inclement weather and stormy seas and haunted with the fear of monsters and dragons. His is the world inhabited by Witches, Magicians, Ghosts, Calibans, Graymalkins and fiends, who

had a thousand noses.
Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea.

His characters are generally of a more primitive type than men

and women in Christianized Europe. Chaos on earth is always preceded by «a civil strife in heaven». A tempest strikes terror to the followers of Brutus. The eclipses in the sun and moon forebode dark things to Gloucester. Macbeth was incited to murder by the greeting of witches. Othello sincerely believed in the charm of a handkerchief. Moreover, Shakespeare, as we have discussed in a previous chapter, pins no faith on Divine Justice. The virtuous perish with the wicked at the end of the fifth act. When King Lear invokes the heavens against filial ingratitude, he is answered, not by a Divine Judgment on his daughters, but by storm and rain, thunder and lightning, which render his desperate condition even more unbearable. Practically none of Shakespeare's tragic heroes possess a genuine Christian sentiment or believe in a future world. For Hamlet Death is «the undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns». Macbeth compares life with a brief candle, a walking shadow and «a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more». When both Christians and infidels are involved in a dramatic action, Shakespeare's sympathy often sides with the infidels rather than with the Christians, as in the case of Shylock and Othello. It may be asked why Shakespeare, writing in the high tide of Christianity, should express a spirit which is so unchristian. The answer is that, as Prof. Dover Wilson has recently pointed out, «the tragic Shakespeare was a suffering Shakespeare» (15). The period during which he wrote most of his great tragedies was a period of grief and despair. He wrote «under the condition of mental stress» which «came near to madness in 'Lear' »(16). If it is despair which often drives men to religion, it is also despair which often leads men to revolt against it. In their hours of unhappiness men naturally brood more over their tragic vision of life, and in the case of genius, such tragic vision takes shape in works of art. Shakespearean tragedy, if it is not entirely a natural growth of the culture of the time as in the case of Greek tragedy, is at least a personal necessity. Christianity might have

saved Shakespeare from the vale of despondency, but it would also have melted into air Hamlet and Lear. Shakespeare was a prodigal son who never returned home to Christianity, and who will say that humanity is the loser for it?

The tragedies of Corneille and Racine are usually described as «classical». This may be true so far as form is concerned. But in sentiment and spirit, Corneille and Racine are really more remote from the Greeks than Shakespeare. In Shakespeare, as we have said, the pagan sentiment of Fate still predominates, and his tragic conception is not very different from that of the Greeks. With Cornelle and Racine the Christian spirit comes for the first time to be predominant in Tragedy, and the emphasis they lay on the liberty of human will is diametrically opposite to the Greek idea of fatality. Corneille is perhaps a more thorough-going Christian moralist, and for that reason, a less tragic poet, than Racine. Looking on the surface, the Corneillian tragedy generally represents the conflict between duty and passion, for example, between honour and love in «Cid», between patriotism and love in «Horace», between generousity and the instinct of vengeance in «Cinna», between religious sentiment and worldly affections in «Polyeucte». But the conflict is only apparent, and in the end it is invariably the sense of duty which triumphs. Often it is only an easy triumph. Take a simple example from «Polyeucte», which is professedly a Christian play. Pauline loves Sévère but marries Polyeucte to please her father. Sévère becomes a fovouritve of the Emperor of Rome and returns in all pomp with the intention to marry Pauline. She thinks it a wife's duty to refuse to see her former lover, but her father, Félix, thinks more of his own safety:

Pauline: Il est toujours aimable, et je suis toujours femme;
Dans le pouvoir sur moi que ses regards ont eu,
Je n'ose m'assurer de toute ma vertu.
Je ne le verrai point.

Félix: Il faut le voir, ma fille,
Ou tu trahis ton père et toute la famille.

Pauline: C'est à moi d'obéir, puisque vous commandez;
Mais voyez les périls où vous me hasardez.

So Pauline receives Sévère. She informs him that she has become the wife of another man. Sévère accuses her of inconstancy and his strong words betray his despair and anger. Pauline assures him however that it is duty which forbids her to follow her natural inclination. Sévère asks pardon:

Pauline: Et voyez qu'un devoir moins ferme et moins sincère
N'aurait pas mérité l'amour du grand Sévère.
Sévère: Ah, Madame, excusez une aveugle douleur
Qui ne connaît plus rien que l'excès du malheur:
Je nommais inconstance, et prenais pour un crime
De ce juste devoir l'effort le plus sublime.

Most of Corneille's tragedies are written in similar strains. There is always something conventional and superficial in his most pathetic scenes. To those who are born in a different age and under a different sky, Corneille will ever remain the least tragic of all tragic poets, he will never touch their heart — tragically at least.

Racine in his youth experienced an intense inner struggle between the religious devotion which was forced on him by his family circle and the taste for theatre which he imbibed from Euripides and other classical authors. So his life represents a sort of tragic conflict wich is mirrored in his works. By intention he is a Christian, but now and then he becomes a pagan in spite of himself. As the Greek and the Hebrew spirit are antagonistic to each other, the result of the blending is not always happy. When he is a Christian, he is hampered by his pagan inclination; and when he is a pagan, he is shackled by his Christian education. He is seldom whole-hearted in either way. For example let us examine «Phèdre», which is, in his own opinion, the best of his tragedies. It is undoubtedly a Christian play by intention. Racine says explicitly in the Preface: «Je n'en ai point fait où la vertu soit plus mise en jour que dans celle-ci. Les moindres fautes y sont

sévèrement punies. La seule pensée du crime y est regardée avec autant d'horreur que le crime même». This is why he makes Phœdra less culpable and Hippolytus less innocent than they are represented by Euripides. Pœdra neither reveals her love to Hippolytus nor calumniates him herself. She leaves it all to her confident. Hippolytus, on the other hand, is no longer a spotless hero devoted to chastity, but is made to love Aricie against his father's expressed will. So the catastrophe of the play is more or less justified as a divine punishment. Some critics would trace in «Phèdre» even the influence of the Jansenist doctrine of Grace. God may abandon those, they say, who have gone astray from the right way to the perversity of their own soul and leave them to roll from crime to crime.

But if we examine the piece more closely, we shall find that there are many things in it which an honest Christian could hardly condone. It is rather surprising that Arnauld should have approved it without reserve. The theme of adultery and incest is in itself repugnant to the Christian sentiment. Euripides places the blame on Aphrodite, so for him there is no question of punishment. Racine wants to introduce Christian moral ideas into the play, the all-important question is: Does he place the blame on Phœdra or on some divine power? If he places it on Phœdra, then all the rest of her crimes follow as a punishment of her initial fault. But even then there are difficulties concerning the terrible death of Hippolytus, and the calamities that fall on Theseus and Aricie. They can hardly be explained as the revelation of Providence. The greatest difficulty in the play is, however, that Racine does not discard the rôle of Aphrodite altogether. Phœdra is conscious of being pushed willy-nilly by a force which she cannot resist, for she says:

C'est Venus tout entière à sa proie attachée.

In the Preface Racine makes it clear also that «son crime est plutôt une punition des Dieux qu'un mouvement de sa volon-

té». One may well ask: If her initial crime is «a movement of the will of Gods», what is that for which she deserves her punishment? Boileau speaks of Phœdra as «Malgré soi perfide et incestueuse», and he is right. Is all this reconciliable with the Christian faith? The fact is that in «Phèdre», the Christian idea of Providence and the pagan Greek notion of fatality are pell-mell mixed together regardless of their incompatibility. As a result, the effect of each is adulterated and weakened by the other. To appreciate the real value of «Phèdre» and of Racine's plays in general, one must leave aside both its Christian morality and its Greek heritage, and regard them simply as subtle studies of human nature. The interest in his plays chiefly lies in the conflict of passions. The conflict as he represented it is much more real and intense than what had been represented by Corneille. More than any other classical author, Racine paved the way for the later development of psychological dramas, and we may say, of psychological novels as well. He is more a father of the moderns than an heir of the Greeks. It is he who rings the knell of Tragedy.

Since the Renaissance the pagan spirit has reasserted itself and Christianity has been gradually losing its hold on man's mind. But the decline of Christianity does not coincide with a revival of Tragedy. Both fatality and Providence have receded from the scene and in their place Science reigns supreme. Everytihng is explained in terms of cause of effect. Even chance and probability have come in the domain of exact mathematics, and the dark region of the unconscious has been laid bare to consciousness by psychologists. What the ancients regarded as mysteries are to us now but mere superstitions. Materialism and realism, the twin offspring of science, have dealt a mortal blow to Tragedy. It is not that the moderns have lost the consciousness of the tragic side of life. But Tragedy, with its limited length, its concentrated interest and its idealized character can no longer satisfy the moderns. For the refined mind the different shades of intimate sentiment are much better painted in a novel than in a tragedy. For the vulgar,

the highly idealized tragedy does not assuage their thirst for strong stumulus; they prefer the cinema to the theatre. The lofty thrones on which once sat Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare and other great tragic poets, are now occupied on the one hand by novelists such as Dostoïeffsky, D. H. Lawrence and Marcel Proust, and on the other by Chaplin Maurice Chevalier and Company. The tragic muse seems to have gone never to return:

Tragic passion
and such grave stuff is this day out of fashion.

The complaint of Middleton and Dekker seems to be even more justified in our days than in theirs.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

I.

In the present Chapter we propose to collect the different threads of argument that are scattered about in the foregoing pages and try to weave them into an organic whole. Though our business is now mainly recapitulatory, we shall make the present Chapter as self-contained as possible, without making tedious references to what has been said in the previous Chapters, so that a clear notion of our view may be formed from our concluding remarks alone.

Let us briefly recall the situation in which we enjoy a tragedy: your work is done for the day, and you have money to spend on amusements. Various attractions present themselves for your choice, but you decide for the theatre. The house is already crowded and all spectators are held in anxious expectancy. Presently the curtain is drawn, and all eyes converge to a stage brightly lighted and artistically decorated. For two or three hours you are

transported to an entirely different world, the threads of your daily cares have been clipped with your ticket. Instead of changing remarks on weather with your next-door neighbour or making bargains for butter and cheese with your grocer, you have before your eyes great heroes, high princes, incredible villains and sometimes even the Gods themselves, getting entangled in extraordinary situations, making fatal mistakes, committing hideous crimes. incurring unspeakable misfortunes and meeting horrible death. You witness Agamemnon sacrifiicing his own daughter, Clytemnestra betraying and murdering her own husband, and Orestes plunging a dagger into the bosom of his own mother; you listen to Cassandra foretelling dreadful calamities on the House of Atreus, the Trojan women lamenting their captivity and servitude, Othello telling the Venetian ambassadors the story of his glorious past, or Hamlet soliloquizing on «the undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns». You follow these terrible events in breathless silence, the spectacle monopolizes your consciousness, and you imitate sympathetically those unfortunate personages. You utter a sigh or drop a tear in spite of yourself. At the interval you say to your companion: «they are terribly unlucky», and he echoes your remark: «What a pity that they should have come to this!» Yet in spite of all this, you and your companion are equally highly pleased and applaud the actors for having done well. You are excited and exultant, you feel as if you had taken part in an animated intimate conversation, as if a great burden had been lifted from your heart. Sometimes you have a similar feeling when you have only read a great masterpiece of Sophocles or Shakespeare.

All this seems so natural that you hardly think that there is a problem in it. But in your philosophical moments, you may recall your experience at the theatre and wonder why tragedy, which represents painful events, should give us pleasure. The more you think of it, the more you will be puzzled by it. Why do you pay money to see greatness thrown away, or strength and beauty fru-

strating themselves or tortured to death? If you dislike the sight of suffering in real life, why do you enjoy «Hamlet» or «Phèdre»? Answers to these questions have been offered on high authority. But when you have searched dusty shelves for learned theories and pondered over them, you will be disappointed to find that they do not always square with your own actual experience and very often they are at variance with both common sense and strict logic. Even the philosophers have their drowsy moments.

The problem of tragic pleasure is not so simple as it appears at first sight. Looking on the surface, you will see that tragedy contains much that is terrible. But it contains also something more. The tragic is never merely terrible. It inspires and uplifts us whereas the merely terrible harrows us and leaves us a dominent sense of gloom and depression. A realistic account of murder that we can find every day in newspapers never gives us the same impression as «Macbeth», and an accident in which a man is killed by a motar-car does not move us in the same way as the passage in «Phèdre» where the messenger tells us of the terrible death of Hippolytus. The one possesses a touch of heroic grandeur, whereas the other is characterized by its sordidness. The failure to make such an obvious distinction has led Faguet and others to think that pleasure in tragedy is a sinister satisfaction of our malignant and cruel instincts. The so-called malevolence theory would imply that the intensity of tragic effect stands in direct proportion to the degree of horror. But as a matter of fact, there is a limit beyond which the terrible, instead of giving pleasure, actually causes pain. Physical torture, for example, is generally treated in tragedy with reticence. Oedipus did not blind himself before the spectators, the scene in «King Lear» in which Cornwall and Regan plucked off the eyes of Old Gloucester arouses our indignation and horror. It has all the sordidness of an actual act of cruelty, terrible without being tragic.

The failure to make the distinction between the tragic and the merely terrible has also led many people to confuse Tragedy

as a work of art with the suffering in actual life. As tragedy represents misfortunes and calamities, people have got into the habit of speaking of any misfortune or calamity as a «Tragedy». Take up a newspaper at random, you will find the word «tragedy» at least once or twice used for such events as a railway accident, a bankruptcy or a family dispute. You often hear people say: «As there is so much tragedy in actual life, one no longer goes to the theatre for it»; and the realists cry: «Let us have our modern tragedy true to life!» Now the fact is that there is no more tragedy in actual life than there is poetry in a dictionary or sculpture in a quarry of stones. Tragedy is a work of art, shaped by the creative imagination of a great master. It is manifestly artificial and ideal. It is true that Tragedy represents such misfortunes and calamities as we do often find in actual life. But we never find them exactly the same. Mere misfortunes and calamities do not make a tragedy. A ship-wreck does not make its victims tragic heroes, nor could the disappointment in love of John the blacksmith be ranked with the disaster of Romeo. Misfortunes and calamities become tragedies only when they have been «filtered» through the medium of art. Tragedy, as the aestheticians say, gives us a «distanced» view of life. The actions and passions are put out of gear with their habitual practical associations, and we look on them only at a distance and in a detached spirit.

There are several devices by which life is «distanced» in Tragedy. The most obvious one is the temporal or spatial remoteness of the events represented. The scene is laid in some far-off country, the action is represented to have taken place «once upon a time». The tragic poets, both ancient and modern, draw their material generally from primitive mythology or remote history. When the curtain is drawn, the spectators are confronted with personages clad in antique costumes moving in exotic settings, they feel at once that they are no longer transacting business in the exchange or examining criminal cases in London slums.

The exceptional nature of the tragic situations, characters and

actions constitutes a further distancing factor. You are no longer watching crowds of insignificant human beings rushing to catch an underground train or engaged in petty disputes with rascals and gamblers in a public tavern; but superb heroes on the turning point of their fortune or innocent heroines at the last moment of their death agony. In one or two hours, Troy is going to fall, Rome is to change hands from Brutus to Antony, or the forest of Birnam will be moving to Dunsinane. Everything is built on a gigantic scale. Life assumes a dimension and reaches an intensity which you would never meet with in your ordinary world of compromise and mediocrity. As Mr. Bullough has justly observed, «the tragic of tragedy would, transposed into ordinary life, in nine cases out of ten, end in drama, in comedy or even in farce, for lack of steadfastness, for fear of conventions, for the dread of 'scenes', for a hundred and one petty faithlessnesses towards a belief or an ideal» (1).

Distance is further increased by certain traditional techniques and formal qualities of dramatic art. Actual events never divide themselves in five acts, nor is their duration confined to a few hours. They advance by insensible progress and in a haphazard manner so that yau find it difficult afterwords to detect the links among the various incidents. But in Tragedy you have to observe the unity of action and inetrest, and very often to set a limit to time and space. Events are compressed together like distilled essence with all alien matter thrown off. The poetical element is another factor to be considered. Your ordinary men and women would never declare their love or lament their woe in a pompous diction set in long-winged blank verse or Alexandrines. But a long tradition has sanctified the practice of writing tragedy in verse, and the best authorities are agreed that Tragedy suffers a great loss if verse is abandoned altogether. The more tragic the situation is, the greater is the need for verse. Many pathetic passages in great tragedies would be unbearable if they were written in prose.

Finally in all great tragedies there is always an otherworld atmosphere, an unearthly light, which marks them off from the actual life. Greek tragedy is related to religious rites and has a sacred halo around it. Modern tragedy, though secular in nature, often introduces the supernatural to give itself a touch of mystery. The effect of this otherworld atmosphere is enhanced by theatrical arrangements. The general theatrical milieu, the shape of the stage, the artificial lighting and the unrealistic setting of the scene, the costumes, conventional postures and chanting voice of the actors, all contribute to the increase of distance. There exists a gulf between the spectators' world and the world across the foot-lights which neither the actors nor the spectators can overstep. The spectators are only asked to look on, and not to take part in the events on the stage. Their mental attitude is thus detached and isolated. No practical interest could come up to interfere with their aesthetic contemplation.

Now it becomes clear that the misfortunes and calamities as represented by Tragedy cannot be put on the same footing with those in actual life. When Plato reproaches the artists with being «twice removed from reality», he really understates the case. The tragic poets are as many times removed from reality as the number of the «distancing» devices which they employ. In Tragedy you do not enjoy misfortunes and calamities as such, you enjoy them as «distanced» or «removed from reality». All the devices just enumerated make them vivid enough to interest, but not acute enough to wound. The same truth is often expressed by saying that the painful emotions in tragedy are mitigated by the sense of illusion. Though in a moment of concentrated attention, we may not be distinctly aware of the fictitious nature of tragic events, we are nevertheless prevented by various «distancing» factors from taking them as real. In Tragedy the terrible is subdued and transfigured by the power of art. We are in a state or aesthetic contemplation and our pleasure is essentially an aesthetic pleasure. Malevolence, moral sympathy, the sense of justice and other practical considerations either do not come in at all, or, if they do, they usurp a place which really does not belong to them.

II.

So far we have only discussed the tragic as an objective quality and emphasized the distinction between it and what is merely terrible in actual life. When we analyze our subjective attitudes in presence of the tragic, we shall find that our problem is further complicated by individual differences. After the representation of a fine tragedy, all the spectators are pleased, but each for a different reason. Some feel glad that the villains are after all punished; Hamlet killed Claudius and Macbeth did not survive Banquo and Macduff. Others applaud the art of the poet and actors. Others, again, are pleased simply because they have experienced a delightful emotional thrill. Perhaps these are not yet all the reasons that the audience of a full-packed theatre might give for their satisfaction. When you talk of tragic pleasure, which kind of pleasure do you exactly mean then?

Man is pre-eminently a moral being. Tragedy treats serious matters. It is natural that the audience of a fine tragedy should be stirred both emotionally and intellectually. Before your very eyes a virtuous and prosperous king comes suddenly to know his unintentional and yet hideous crimes and is driven to exile, an old father is put out of door in a stormy night by his own daughters, or a villain calumniates before a jealous husband a woman whom you know to be perfectly virtuous and innocent. On such occasions can you remain undisturbed and feel no sympathy for the unfortunate sufferers? Do you not wish for them a better fortune and for the wicked their just punishment? Again, thinking beings as you are, do you not ponder over the problems of evil and justice and even cast a glance at the larger cosmological issues such as fatality, Providence and human liberty? When you think of all these questions, you will probably excuse certain writers whose theories of Tragedy are based just on these considerations. Aristotle insists that the tragic hero should be neither a villain nor a saint, but a good man with some flaw. Other writers like Ger-

vinus even go so far as to regard the theatre as a court of justice and our pleasure in Tragedy as a moral satisfaction with the just distribution of reward and punishment. Edmund Burke would believe that our sympathy with the sufferer engenders the pleasure in the sight of suffering, for, if the sight of suffering causes pain, we would run away, instead of rendering help, from the most tragic situation where sympathy is most needed. According to Hegel, Tragedy represents the conflict of two equally justifiable but one-sided ethical forces and the catastrophe restores universal harmony. For Schopenhauer, on the other hand, Tragedy reveals to us the vanity of vanities and teaches us to renounce the Will-to-live. Different stories have been told by other writers equally eminent and equally self-confident. We need not call in question the honesty of men like Burke, Hegel and Schopenhauer. They may have enjoyed tragedy each in the manner they have described. But unfortunately their accounts contradict one another, and each of them involves some serious difficulties of its own.

Most of them regard Tragedy from a moral point of view Now Tragedy, as all agree, is a work of art, and our enjoyment of it is above all an aesthetic experience. In aesthetic contemplation, we do often feel a kind of sympathy, but not sympathy in its usual moral or ethical sense. Moral sympathy and aesthetic sympathy differ in three important aspects. In the first place, moral sympathy generally involves a conscious distinction between the suject and the object in a state of trance, we forget ourselves and participate in the life-activities of the object contemplated. Secondly, moral sympathy can never be detached from the context of the life-experience and mental make-up of the subject and it is generally accompanied with hopes and fears; whereas aesthetic sympathy isolates the experience of the moment from the context of life-history and the subject is «lost» in the object. Lastly, moral sympathy is a practical attitude which issues in activities, we try to relieve the object sympathized from the suffering which has aroused our sympathy; whereas aesthetic sympa-

thy leads to no practical consequences, it involves only such imitative activities as feeling sad or joyful in seeing others sad or joyful. The same difference is often expressed by saying that in moral sympathy we act *towards* the object, whereas in aesthetic sympathy we act *with* the object. We stretch our hand *towards* a friend, but *with* a statue or an actor.

In the enjoyment of tragedy, it is aesthetic rather than moral sympathy which we often experience. We do not carry messages from Juliet to Romeo, we simply feel sympathetically her anxiety and her agony. We do not cry to Othello: «You black devil, don't you see Iago is telling you lies? The handkerchief which he told you to have been given away by your wife as a love token to Casius is actually in his own pocket!» but like Othello, we let ourselves be blinded and cry inwardly with him: «O the pity of it!» Of course there are naïve souls who, in a moment of intense illusion, take the tragic events as real and throw themselves in to interfere with the dramatic action. Thus an American philanthropist throws down fifty cents for a poor inventor on the stage to buy wood with it in order to keep his fire going. A Chinese Wood-Cutter mounts the stage and kills with his axe an actor in the rôle of a disloyal minister. Moral sympathy of this kind may easily help to avoid a theatrical catastrophe or to vindicate the principle of justice, but alas, in doing so, it also destroys the tragedy! Those who enjoy Tragedy for sympathy ,justice or any other moral purpose are just like the American philanthropist or the Chinese Wood-Cutter, doing a virtuous deed at the wrong moment.

These instances also show that a proper enjoyment of Tragedy requires a certain amount of self-possession and sober intelligence. The followers of Lipps and Groos are apt to over-emphasize the rôle of aesthetic sympathy or «empathy» as they call it. They often lead people to think that there is no asthetic enjoyment unless there is a complete identification or fusion of the subject with the object, of the ego with the non-ego. But as Müller

Freienfels has observed, aesthetic responses to theatrical performances vary with individuals. There are spectators of the «participant» type who identify themselves with one character after another to the extent of losing all self-consciousness and self-control. There are others of the «contemplator» type who look on the unfolding of dramatic action in a God-like detachment, and enjoy a tragedy mainly for its formal beauty. Diderot noticed long ago a similar difference among the actors. His famous paradox requires that an actor, while simulating emotions «to the life», should be free from sensibility and that he should watch and control himself. The same difference has given rise to two types of theories of tragic pleasure. One type of theories attribute the cause of tragic pleasure to emotional relief, the feeling of tension or the sense of effort. The other type of theories attribute it to the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, to the appreciation of beauty or to the revelation of some profound truth.

The ideal spectator (as well as the ideal actor) stands perhaps between these two extremes. He responds to a tragedy both emotionally and intellectually. Emotionally he identifies himself with the characters and feels more or less as they feel. This enables him to have a first-hand intuitive knowledge of the mind of the characters. It is a primary condition of understanding a tragedy. Intellectually he remains his own master, he sees a tragedy as a work of art and notices the relation of the different parts to the whole. Complete participation without detached contemplation and sober intelligence would lose sight of the formal beauty of a tragedy; complete detachment without sympathetic participation, on the other hand, would fail to give rise to the emotional glow which characterizes all true aesthetic experiences. So the source of tragic pleasure must be sought both in emotional relief and in intellectual curiosity. The enjoyment of tragedy is a complex phenomenon and it varies a good deal with the mental habit of different individuals. It would be misleading to rely exclusively on any one type of theories or any one solution.

III.

Having disentangled the problem of tragic pleasure from certain main complications in which it is involved, we may proceed to determine the specific nature of tragic pleasure itself. «We must ask of tragedy», says Aristotle, «not every kind of pleasure, but only that which is proper to it». It is a shrewd advice, but it may be misleading. There are some writers who have erred because they have ignored it, there are also others who have erred because they have followed it.

It cannot be denied that Tragedy gives a pleasure which is peculiar to itself and which is given by no other form of experience, as every species has its distinctive mark. Such a simple truth has not always been borne in mind by writers on Tragedy. Tragic pleasure has been explained by the need of occupation (Dubos), by the feeling of tension or effort (Lipps, Puffer), by the power of art (Fontenelle, Hume), by emotional relief (Aristotle and his commentators), by intellectual curiosity (Aristotle Santayana, Lucas) and so on. Tragedy may contain all these sources of pleasure, but they are not peculiar to Tragedy alone. You may occupy yourself with gambling or hunting, you may experience a sense of tension or effort in taking a gymnastic exercise, you may satisfy your intellectual curiosity in watching cock-fighting, you may have aesthetic delight in looking at a vase or in reading a lyrical poem. How does the enjoyment of tragedy differ from all these? Our complaint against all the theories just mentioned is not that they are false, but that they are very vague and inadequate.

But on the other hand it should also be remembered that a species possesses, besides its differentiating attribute, the common qualities of the genus to which it belongs. Socrates was no less a Vertebrate than a Greek philosopher. If you have discovered the pleasure peculiar to Tragedy and point to it triumphantly: «Tragic pleasure is that and nothing else», you would as well

say that Socrates was a Greek philosopher and therefore not a Vertebrate. Perhaps you would say: «Of course there is no one so absurd as that!» But theories of Tragedy have been proposed one after another with the conviction that this alone is true and the rest all false. Would Hegel concede that there is in Tragedy something else than the vindication of Eternal Justice? Or would Schopenhauer be induced to believe that the revelation of the worthlessness of life may not be the main cause of tragic pleasure? One-sided views are generally apt to be false, especially in the domain of mental life where every event is inextricably related to an infinite number of other events, and where isolated causes and isolated effects are alike pure abstractions. You never enjoy Tragedy only for the pleasure which is proper to it. Moreover, the differentiating attribute of an object or phenomenon consists not only in the presence of some entirely new element, but very often also in the manner and proportion in which various common elements are combined together. Is it not possible that tragic pleasure may have nothing else peculiar to itself than the way in which it combines such common sources of pleasure as emotional relief, sense of effort, intellectual curiosity, the power of art, etc.? This consideration makes it all the more incumbent on us to envisage the problem in all its aspects and ignore no factor which might possibly contribute to tragic pleasure. Let us build up our argument like a pyramid, starting with the broadest basis and come gradually to the culminating point.

(1) The enjoyment of Tragedy is first of all simply an activity, and it is natural that it yields the pleasure which attends human activities in general. Here it is of supreme importance to determine the nature of pleasure itself. The Hedonists are wrong in regarding feeling as the cause of volitions and activities, for feeling depends on our subjective interest and attitude, and nothing is pleasant or painful by itself apart from its relation to our subjective interest and attitude. The truer view is that feeling is the result of volitions and activities. Life is constantly striving to

realize itself in activities. Feeling is the indicator of the success or failure of that strife: pleasure when activity is unimpeded and vital energy finds its natural outlet; pain when activity is obstructed and vital energy is pent-up. The antithesis of life, as every one knows, is death, which simply means the cessation of all vital activites. To cease to be active is of all things the most abhorred by all living beings. The languid state of indolence is a painful situation which man tries at all cost to avoid by seeking various kinds of occupations. Tragedy, as Abbé Bubos holds, delights us because it is one of the occupations which release the feeling of ennui. But life also means change. Man soon gets tired of one occupation and craves for something different. Tragedy is not only an occupation, but also a diversion. It sets us free from the monotony of our daily routine and drudgery. Herein, again, lies one of its sources of delight.

Both occupation and diversion give vent to our vital energy, they arouse the sense of tension, effort or vitality. In Tragedy we do not enjoy the mere sight of suffering, but we enjoy it as a strong stimulant which shocks and vivifies us. «We are not pleased by an evil»; writes Prof. Santayana, «we are pleased by a vivid and exciting sensation which is a good».

The sense of effort, which we feel in enjoying a tragedy, comes mainly from our sympathetic imitation of the actions and passions of the dramatic personages. Tragic characters are generally characterized by their great power, strong will and uncompromising spirit. They often identify themselves with some forces or ideals and carry them to the end with a superhuman steadfastness and heroic persistence. We are «galvanized», as it were, by coming into contact with them and by imitating them sympathetically.

Moreover, the sense of effort is also partly due to our intellectual curiosity, to our natural thirst for more experience and knowledge. Tragedy, if it is painful, is also profoundly true. «The desire for truth», writes Prof. Santayana, «makes us eagerly

welcome whatever comes in its name». «A primitive instinct makes us turn the eyes full on any object that appears in the dim borderland of our field of vision — and this all the more quickly, the more terrible that object threatens to be» (2).

As Tragedy presents us with the sight of human suffering, some writers have been led to think that tragic pleasure, like the delight in gladiatorial shows and public executions, is to be attributed to the instinctive malignity and cruelty in human nature. The weakness of this view, as we have shown, lies in that it confounds Tragedy as a work of art with suffering in actual life. It may be pointed out furthermore that even the delight in gladiatorial shows and public executions is better explained by their exciting nature than by human malignity and cruelty. If Tragedy has anything in common with them, it is perhaps in the fact that they are, like Tragedy, strong stimulants for our vital energy and for our curiosity, rather than in their appeal to our baser instincts.

(2) These various sources of pleasure common to most human activities do not, of course, yield the pleasure proper to Tragedy or even the pleasure proper to art in general. The conditions of beauty remain to be fulfilled. The enjoyment of Tragedy is more specifically an artistic activity, and it is natural that it involves the pleasure common to all aesthetic experiences. Tragedy, in common with other forms of art, differs from the ordinary objects which engage our activities in that it moves in an ideal world, it is life set in an artificial frame and viewed at a distance. The activity which it calls forth does not serve any external practical purpose, it is enjoyed for its own sake. It is what Schiller has called «free activity» or «spontaneous overflow of exuberant energy». Art is thus a compensation for reality. It offers us an imaginary world more satisfactory than the real one. To say this of Tragedy may perhaps cause some surprise, for Tragedy paints the darker side of life. But it is nevertheless true that Tragedy redresses the balance of the real world. Compared with our narrow circle of insignificant operations, the tragic world is at least a world of

extraordinary exertions, strong passions, superhuman constancy and heroic grandeur. It is a shining picture steeped in the light of Apollo, as Nietzsche has symbolically put it, in which the Dionysian man forgets his Primordial suffering and attains «redemption through appearance».

Like art in general, Tragedy is an emotional experience ardently felt, beautifully expressed and confidentially communicated. The experience of a strong emotion is in itself a source of delight which is doubly heightened by the beauty of expression and by the effect of sympathy. In Tragedy we come both emotionally and intellectually into intimate contact with a master mind, and through that contact we imbibe something of that vital power, that emotional glow, that exulting sense in moulding the shapes of things to heart's content which has thrilled the poet in the inspired moment of creation. We share his joy in a beauteous vision and triumph with him over the conquest of immense technical difficulties (3). We are uplifted by his exalted style, lulled by his melody and rhythm and enchanted by his images and symbols. The terrible event represented is subjugated and transfigured by the power of art. We may be saddened by the truth, but we are delighted by the vehicle that conveys it to us. In all great works of art content can never be separated from form .One reason for our delight in Tragedy is that we do not consider misfortunes and calamities apart from the form in which they are represented. It is only in inartistic works where content and form are not fused together so as to form an inseparable whole that we are apt to direct our attention to content apart from form, and that the painful nature of tragic events is most likely to thrust itself upon us.

(3) Tragedy, in common with other forms of dramatic art, differs from art in general in that it imitates action in a lively manner through the medium of actual human beings. A novel, an epic poem or even a picture may be tragic, but they all represent action indirectly and their chief interest lies mainly in character drawing. This is why Aristotle, in estimating the relative impor-

tance of different elements of Tragedy, ranks plot the highest of all. «Action», says Schlegel, «is the true enjoyment of life, nay, life itself». This explains the fact that the taste for theatre is more universal than the plastic arts. The majority of people who care little for pictures and statues, are yet enthusiastic about drama. Theatres are generally more frequented than museums and art galleries. As drama is mainly concerned with action, the feeling of vitality is much more intensely felt in seeing a play than in looking at a picture or in reading a lyrical poem.

(4) So far we have dwelt mainly on generalities. But Tragedy has also its distinctive attribute. It differs from other forms of dramatic art in that the action represented is of the most serious nature. The most serious side of life consists not in naïve joy or unmitigated happiness but in suffering and distress. Thus Tragedy portrays evils, misfortunes and calamities. It tells the story of the fall from prosperity to adversity of some hero or heroine who is characterized either by heroic grandeur or by moral greatness. Such a fall is not always morally justifiable. The principal personage may have some flaw in his or her character, but that flaw hardly deserves the terrible punishment in the catastrophe. There would be no tragedy if there were no evils and if the world were entirely governed by the principle of justice. Tragedy generally gives us the impression that there is in the universe a power which is neither controllable by human will nor intelligible to human understanding, and that this power is blind to the distinction of right and wrong and it crushes the virtuous as well as the wicked. Such an impression is generally described as the sense of Fate. It is, if not the only essential feature, at least one of the essential features, in Tragedy.

In Tragedy, we are not simply amused as in comedy, but moved, thrilled and uplifted. Comedy, as Bergson has observed, touches mainly our intellect, whereas Tragedy plunges deep into our heart and arouses our emotions. The emotions aroused by Tragedy are pity and fear, as Aristotle pointed out long ago. It is

essential to the trgaic experience that both these emotions should be aroused at one and the same time. Pity consists of two elements: love or sympathy for the object, and a sense of regret for its defect or suffering. As an aesthetic emotion it is closely related to the sense of the graceful. A graceful object looks as if it solicits our sympathy, and its fragile nature awakens in us a slight sense of regret. In tragedy, pity is awakened mainly by the sense of Fate. We regret that things should have been as they are, and in our sympathy with mankind in general, we wish them to have been otherwise. This feeling often gives Tragedy a touch of pessimism and melancholy and a kind of beauty which comes near to the graceful tinctured with sadness.

But the graceful tinctured with sadness, taken by itself, does not arouse the sense of the tragic proper, for it lacks the inspiring or uplifting power. This power is supplied by the emotion of fear. Fear as an aesthetic emotion is an essential ingredient in the sense of the sublime. The sublime object, as Kant has analyzed it, gives us first a «momentary check», or overwhelms us, by its greatness in dimension or power; and then forces us to share in aesthetic sympathy its greatness. We are at first stupefied, and suddenly come to be aware of our own littleness or impotence, and then we burst our own limits, identify ourselves ideally with the sublime object and feel ourselves inspired, ennobled and magnified. The emotion of the first stage is fear, that of the next wonder or admiration. The tragic affects us in exactly the same manner. It is first of all terrible because of its greatness in dimension and power. Before the terrible work of Fate we feel our own littleness and feebleness. But this «momentary check» is counterbalanced by the sense of human dignity awakened in us by the superhuman persistence and heroic grandeur with which the tragic personages face their misfortunes and calamities.

The tragic is, then, essentially similar to the sublime, but there is in the tragic more than the sublime. The sublime is above our pity, and in contemplating a stormy night or a lofty moun-

tain, we never feel anything like a sense of regret. Tragedy, on the other hand, has always something tender in it ,something that makes us feel regretful for its very existence. In a word, we feel pity as well as fear in tragedy. The tragic, we may say then, is the combined effect of the sublime and the piteous, with the first as the preponderant element of the two. As the tragic is closely related to the sublime, and as the positive stage in the experience of the sublime involves the emotion of wonder or admiration, Aristotle's list of tragic emotions is perhaps incomplete. To pity and fear we should add wonder, admiration or reverence. In Tragedy the sense of human dignity is as essential as the sense of Fate. There would be no tragedy if there were no conflict, no reaction against calamities. In that conflict the tragic hero is generally defeated, but morally he triumphs, his spirit remains undaunted. If we do not feel something like admiration or wonder, we have certainly missed an essential part of the tragic spirit.

The problem of pity and fear in Tragedy is traditionally related to that of «Catharsis». According to Aristotle, «Tragedy affects through pity and fear the Catharsis of these emotions». Two interpretations of the word «Catharsis» have been proposed. The older view was that it is a religious metaphor, maning «purification». Modern philologists are inclined, however, to take it in its medical sense, meaning «purgation». Now from the psychological point of view, the word «Catharsis» can mean neither «purification» in the old religious sense, nor purgation» in the technical medical sense. For, in the first place, emotions are functions and not static entities, they do not exist either before or after excitation, the are not like dirty linen which can be dyed or washed. Secondly, if «pity and fear» are understood not as the emotions themselves, but as the corresponding instinctive dispositions of these emotions, then it must be pointed out that the ordinary instinctive dispositions are biologically useful, they do not necessarily contain, with the majority of human beings, a painful or morbid element to be purified or purged. Pathological cases are rare, and Tragedy is not a special treat-

ment for madmen and lunatics. Thirdly, instincts and emotions have not been much modified throughout all these long ages, they are not likely to be either purified or purged by fictitious tales of suffering in a few hours. Besides, biological evidence points to the conclusion that exercise strengthens rather than mitigates the force of instincts. Lastly, the nature of emotions is partly determined by the circumstances at the moment of their excitation. As pity and fear in Tragedy and those of actual life are aroused under entirely different circumstances, it is unlikely that occasional exercises of pity and fear in Tragedy should have any sensible effect on the pity and fear in actual life.

Attempts have also been made to interpret the word «Catharsis» in the light of the Freudian Psychology. Now «Catharsis», in the general Freudian psycholocal principles, means the discharge of some «affect» or energy that has been repressed with its associated idea. The discharge is affected, not by a simple direct relief, but by the «displacement» of the «affect» on a different idea which is less objectionable in the eye of consciousness. When it is applied to Tragedy, «Catharsis» means for the Freudians a «wish-fulfillment» and especially the fulfillment of an incestuous wish which forms the nucleus of the «Oedipus complex. All these are modern ideas which cannot be attributed to Aristotle. Besides the danger of reading modern ideas into old doctrines, the Freudian interpretation, taken by itself, also involves some serious difficulties. To mention but two, it implies, in the first place, the idea that a wish is fulfilled in the unconscious while the pleasure of its fulfillment is felt in consciousness. This idea seems to us contradictory, for it amounts to saying that a wish is fulfilled, but the subject (i.e. The unconscious personality) is not satisfied. Secondly, it leaves the formal beauty of Tragedy unexplained. The natur eof the unconscious requires that a wish should be *symbolically* expressed, but it does not require that it should be *beautifuly* expressed.

We have formed a much simpler view on the matter. Catharsis means nothing more than an «emotional relief». Both pity and fear are accompanied with a mixed feeling-tone. Pity is pleasant as it is an expression of love and sympathy, painful as it contains also a sense of regret. Fear is pleasant as it shocks and vivifies us, painful as it arises from the sense of danger. The pain in both pity and fear is felt in Tragedy. The notion of purified pity and pain is untenable, for pity and fear would not be what they are, if they were painless. It is the element of pain that gives the tragic experience its peculiar vividness and pungency. But the pain in Tragedy does not hold out to the end. As pleasure results from all unimpeded activities, pain itself may become a source of pleasure if it finds free expression either in bodily activities or in some form of art. Grief, for example, brings about a delightful relief, when one has wept. The poets sing more about melancholy than about pure joy. The expression of an emotion, whether pleasant or painful, gives vent to the energy that is attached to it, or as we usually say, «relieves» it. «Emotional relief» is really synonymous with «Emotional expression». In Tragedy, when the emotions of pity and fear are felt and expressed, the energy which is attached to them is discharged, the pain in them is converted to pleasure and swells the current of the positive pleasure which is caused on the one hand by tragic pity and fear and on the other, by the power of art. The pleasure which is peculiar to Tragedy is thus a mixed feeling. It is the sum-total of the positive pleasure in pity and fear and in art, and the pleasure which is converted from the pain in pity and fear as a result of relief, or expression, or as Aristotle would have it, «Catharsis».

IV.

In conclusion a few words may be said of Tragedy in relation to religion and philosophy. Tragedy, like religion and philosophy, is deeply concerned with the problems of evil, divine ju-

stice and human responsibility. But the tragic spirit is alien to both, for Tragedy finds no definite solution to ultimate problems, whereas religion and philosophy try either to take refuge in a dogma which is emotionally satisfactory, or to build up a metaphysical system which is rationalistically demonstrable. This difference explains why those great races like the Chinese, the Hindus and the Hebrews, who content themselves with a religion or a philosophy or both, have produced no tragedy at all, though their literary achievements in other respects rank very high. Tragedy mirrors the perplexity of an intellectually active and emotionally sensitive mind before the vision of some terrible event which is at once against our natural desire and beyond our limited power of understanding. The tragic attitude resembles rather the perplexed and yet fervent state of mind that often leads to a religious conversion, than the settled faith of a sincere religious convert. Racine, for example, gave up the writing of tragedies after he had been definitely converted to Jansenism. Nor is the tragic attitude that of a sceptic. Greek Tragedy declined with Euripides who was a sceptic. Voltaire, too, was a sceptic but no great tragic poet. A sceptic is an intellectual vagabond who has neither passion for, nor faith in, a home. A tragic poet feels both intellectually and emotionally the strong need of a home but he finds none. Tragedy was Greek in its origin. It was born at a time when Greek thought had not yet crystallized itself into a definite religious creed or a consistent philosophical system. Try all you can, you will never be able to deduce from the works of Aeschylus or Sophocles any well-defined and consistent religious or moral faith. We are not surprised to find Tragedy bitterly attacked by Plato when Greek Philosophy reached its culminating point of development. The same reason accounts for the fact that philosophers, from Aristotle to Hegel and Schopenhauer, cut but poor figures when they try their strength at the problem of Tragedy.

Modern European civilization is a strange mixture of Greek paganism and Hebrew piety. Tragedy as a product of Greek paganism, has always something profane and blasphemous in it. The Greek notion of fatality is hardly compatible with the Christian doctrine of Providence. Thus modern European Tragedy is a transplanted growth on an uncongenial soil. It has not given up the Greek notion of Fate, but it has also smuggled in the Christian idea of divine justice. The unhappy effect of such a blending of incongruous ideas is best seen in the works of Corneille and Racine. Shakespeare in tragedy moves in a pagan world. In spirit he is among the Greeks. Mazzini's objection to Shakespeare that he had neither definite outlook upon life nor any soul-dominating faith is based on the misconception that a great tragic poet should have any moral creed or religious faith at all.

Tragedy always ends with a question mark. It recognized the existence of mystery. If we subject it to a strictly logical analysis, we shall find that it is full of contradictions. It is permeated all through with a deep sense of Fate, and yet it is never pale-livered and crest-fallen; it exalts strenuous effort and heroic resistance. Is shows the greatness and nobility of man at the very moment when it depicts his feebleness and his insignificance. There is in it an unmistakable note of pessimism and melancholy, and yet it inspires and uplifts us with its profound truth, magnificent poetry and heroic grandeur. From the bush of thorns it plucks the rose-blossoms.

Shall we blame Tragedy for its contradictions? for its lack of a definite religious faith and of a consistent philosophical system? «There are more things in heaven and earth», says Hamlet to Horatio, «than are dreamt of in your philosophy». Life is more radiant and many-coloured than the moralists and logicians would have it. The business of Tragedy is «to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature», and not to let

our meddling intellect
misshape the beauteous forms of things.

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ERRATA.

The author begs to apologize for the numerous errors in printing which occur in these pages. They are mainly due to his lack of experience in reading proofs. Allowances must also be made for the fact that the printers who set the manuscript in types do not know English. To facilitate reading, errors in single letters have been corrected with pen, only those of more flagrant nature are printed here with their corrections in Italics.

Page 24, line 12. After the word «object», insert «*and on the other hand, to absorb objective mood into the subject*».

Page 81, line 30, instead of «The feeling-tone of this element of pity is always pleasant se», read: «*The pitiable object is either in distress, or shows some weakness or*».

Page 134. No break between line 11 and line 12.

Page 199. Before «disinterestedness» insert «*word*».

Page 225, line 4, instead of «cite all the emotions of the human breast, terror and pity inclu-» read: «*and laughter'. They never offer, however, a calamitous conclu-*».

Page 237, line 1, instead of «de Racine' (14). The crude representations of the Mediaeval» read: «*Only be affirmative. The early Christian Church and later the*»

Page 263, line 8, instead of «pity and pain» read «pity and *fear*».

Page 268, after No. 13 insert: «14. *Antoine: Memoires, p.* 183».

Page 274, Bibliography XI, after no. 4 insert «5, *Puffer: The Psychology of Beauty*», (1905), pp. 231-252». The following numbers should be 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. After no.10, insert «11, *A. Nicoll: The Theory of Tragedy* (1931), p. 124». The following number should be 12.

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